

Payor Responsibilities

Maintenance Enforcement Program

What can I do to help MEP?

- ▶ Keep MEP immediately updated of all changes to your contact, address and banking information, and employment and financial situation (including Employment Insurance, Workers' Compensation Board, Income Assistance etc.).

You have a legal obligation to update your information with MEP. If your information is not updated, MEP will not be able to notify you of actions being taken or inform you of important information on your case.

- ▶ Know your case number and PIN
- ▶ Make all payments payable to the recipient and send them directly to MEP—do not pay the recipient directly
- ▶ Make sure you are enrolled with MEP before making payments
- ▶ Make sure you are set up with the bank and MEP to make payments online
- ▶ Send payments with enough time for them to be processed
- ▶ If you have a compliment or complaint, tell MEP by following the steps on the *compliment and complaint page*
- ▶ Treat MEP staff with respect and in a polite manner
- ▶ Know that once you are enrolled with MEP the *Maintenance Enforcement Act* allows only MEP to decide how your Order will be enforced. No one else can enforce an order when it is being enforced by MEP.

What can I do if I am feeling unsafe?

- ▶ Call the police (911)
- ▶ Seek a *Court Order*
Emergency Protection Order
Urgent Court Application
- ▶ Refer to these services for help:
Family Violence – NS Family Law
Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Provincial Victim Services Program
Transition House Association of Nova Scotia
- ▶ Inform MEP of any safety concerns in the family. This will allow MEP to handle your case with special care.

When should I contact MEP?

You should contact MEP as soon as you can in the following situations:

- ▶ If your information changes
- ▶ If there is any change made to the Order by the court
- ▶ If there is a change in your or your child's situation that could affect your maintenance payments
- ▶ If the recipient insists on receiving payments from you directly
- ▶ If you believe there is a mistake in MEP's payment records or you do not understand the records

What do I do if I believe the Order no longer reflects my situation or my child's situation?

- ▶ Apply to court to change your Order

MEP cannot make any changes to the terms of an Order. Only a court can change the terms of an Order.

How do I ask the Court to make changes to my Order?

- ▶ Contact the court nearest to you to ask about the court process
- ▶ If you and the recipient agree on the changes to be made, tell the court officer about this
- ▶ You may be able to use services to help you make the changes without needing a court hearing
- ▶ Refer to these services:
Administrative Recalculation
Court-based Assisted Dispute Resolution

If you are living in Nova Scotia, and the recipient lives outside of Nova Scotia, please refer to Interjurisdictional Support Orders process.

Can I opt-out of MEP before it gets started?

Yes, you may: however, both parties must agree to opt-out of MEP **within 10 days** of receiving notice in the mail from MEP that the Order has been filed.

What happens if I do not pay my support?

If you do not pay your support and do not cooperate with MEP to make your payments, MEP will take enforcement actions against you. Some options for enforcement action include:

- ▶ Demanding your contact, financial and employment information from you, the recipient and third parties
- ▶ Taking money from your wages, bank accounts, or other known sources of income (called garnishment)
- ▶ Requesting revocation of your passport
- ▶ Requesting suspension of your motor vehicle licence or hunting and fishing licence

For more information on MEP's enforcement options, please see the *MEP Responsibilities Fact Sheet* and also *How MEP Can Enforce a Support Order* on the website.

Can I ask MEP to stop monitoring or enforcing my Order?

You can make a request to have your Order withdrawn from enforcement by MEP:

- ▶ Contact MEP to discuss this option first
- ▶ Review instructions and complete a *Request for Withdrawal Form* and mail it to MEP

MEP may decline to enforce your Order under the *Maintenance Enforcement Act* for a number of reasons that include these examples:

- ▶ The recipient is taking measures to enforce the Order outside of MEP (More information on this subject will be coming soon)
- ▶ The amount of maintenance is not clear in the Order or the amount relies on a factor that is not in the Order
- ▶ There are terms in the Order that affect maintenance but the meaning is not clear

How do I get answers to my questions?

- ▶ For general information or information about your Order, please see the *Contact Information* page for the ways to contact MEP.
- ▶ You may also need legal advice. Find out more at the NS Family Law website: *Getting Legal Advice*.

Information sheet

- ▶ **Maintenance** means child or spousal support payments
- ▶ **Order** means Maintenance Order and includes registered **agreement**
- ▶ **Payor** means person ordered to pay support
- ▶ **Recipient** means person entitled to receive support