

FAMILY CODE

TITLE 1. THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

SUBTITLE C. DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

CHAPTER 9. POST-DECREE PROCEEDINGS

SUBCHAPTER A. SUIT TO ENFORCE DECREE

Sec. 9.001. ENFORCEMENT OF DECREE. (a) A party affected by a decree of divorce or annulment providing for a division of property as provided by Chapter 7, including a division of property and any contractual provisions under the terms of an agreement incident to divorce or annulment under Section 7.006 that was approved by the court, may request enforcement of that decree by filing a suit to enforce as provided by this chapter in the court that rendered the decree.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, a suit to enforce shall be governed by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure applicable to the filing of an original lawsuit.

(c) A party whose rights, duties, powers, or liabilities may be affected by the suit to enforce is entitled to receive notice by citation and shall be commanded to appear by filing a written answer. Thereafter, the proceedings shall be as in civil cases generally.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 242 (H.B. 389), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 9.002. CONTINUING AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE DECREE. The court that rendered the decree of divorce or annulment retains the power to enforce the property division as provided by Chapter 7, including a property division and any contractual provisions under the terms of an agreement incident to divorce or annulment under Section 7.006 that was approved by the court.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 242 (H.B. 389), Sec. 6, eff.

September 1, 2013.

Sec. 9.003. FILING DEADLINES. (a) A suit to enforce the division of tangible personal property in existence at the time of the decree of divorce or annulment must be filed before the second anniversary of the date the decree was signed or becomes final after appeal, whichever date is later, or the suit is barred.

(b) A suit to enforce the division of future property not in existence at the time of the original decree must be filed before the second anniversary of the date the right to the property matures or accrues or the decree becomes final, whichever date is later, or the suit is barred.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.004. APPLICABILITY TO UNDIVIDED PROPERTY. The procedures and limitations of this subchapter do not apply to existing property not divided on divorce, which are governed by Subchapter C and by the rules applicable to civil cases generally.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.005. NO JURY. A party may not demand a jury trial if the procedures to enforce a decree of divorce or annulment provided by this subchapter are invoked.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.006. ENFORCEMENT OF DIVISION OF PROPERTY.

(a) Except as provided by this subchapter and by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the court may render further orders to enforce the division of property made or approved in the decree of divorce or annulment to assist in the implementation of or to clarify the prior order.

(b) The court may specify more precisely the manner of effecting the property division previously made or approved if the substantive division of property is not altered or changed.

(c) An order of enforcement does not alter or affect the finality of the decree of divorce or annulment being enforced.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 242 (H.B. [389](#)), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 9.007. LIMITATION ON POWER OF COURT TO ENFORCE. (a) A court may not amend, modify, alter, or change the division of property made or approved in the decree of divorce or annulment. An order to enforce the division is limited to an order to assist in the implementation of or to clarify the prior order and may not alter or change the substantive division of property.

(b) An order under this section that amends, modifies, alters, or changes the actual, substantive division of property made or approved in a final decree of divorce or annulment is beyond the power of the divorce court and is unenforceable.

(c) The trial court may not render an order to assist in the implementation of or to clarify the property division made or approved in the decree before the 30th day after the date the final judgment is signed. If a timely motion for new trial or to vacate, modify, correct, or reform the decree is filed, the trial court may not render an order to assist in the implementation of or to clarify the property division made or approved in the decree before the 30th day after the date the order overruling the motion is signed or the motion is overruled by operation of law.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 421 (S.B. [1237](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 9.008. CLARIFICATION ORDER. (a) On the request of a party or on the court's own motion, the court may render a clarifying order before a motion for contempt is made or heard, in conjunction with a motion for contempt or on denial of a motion for contempt.

(b) On a finding by the court that the original form of the division of property is not specific enough to be enforceable by contempt, the court may render a clarifying order setting forth specific terms to enforce compliance with the original division of

property.

(c) The court may not give retroactive effect to a clarifying order.

(d) The court shall provide a reasonable time for compliance before enforcing a clarifying order by contempt or in another manner.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.009. DELIVERY OF PROPERTY. To enforce the division of property made or approved in a decree of divorce or annulment, the court may make an order to deliver the specific existing property awarded, without regard to whether the property is of especial value, including an award of an existing sum of money or its equivalent.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 242 (H.B. 389), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 9.010. REDUCTION TO MONEY JUDGMENT. (a) If a party fails to comply with a decree of divorce or annulment and delivery of property awarded in the decree is no longer an adequate remedy, the court may render a money judgment for the damages caused by that failure to comply.

(b) If a party did not receive payments of money as awarded in the decree of divorce or annulment, the court may render judgment against a defaulting party for the amount of unpaid payments to which the party is entitled.

(c) The remedy of a reduction to money judgment is in addition to the other remedies provided by law.

(d) A money judgment rendered under this section may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement of judgment for debt.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.011. RIGHT TO FUTURE PROPERTY. (a) The court may, by any remedy provided by this chapter, enforce an award of the

right to receive installment payments or a lump-sum payment due on the maturation of an existing vested or nonvested right to be paid in the future.

(b) The subsequent actual receipt by the non-owning party of property awarded to the owner in a decree of divorce or annulment creates a fiduciary obligation in favor of the owner and imposes a constructive trust on the property for the benefit of the owner. Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.012. CONTEMPT. (a) The court may enforce by contempt an order requiring delivery of specific property or an award of a right to future property.

(b) The court may not enforce by contempt an award in a decree of divorce or annulment of a sum of money payable in a lump sum or in future installment payments in the nature of debt, except for:

(1) a sum of money in existence at the time the decree was rendered; or

(2) a matured right to future payments as provided by Section 9.011.

(c) This subchapter does not detract from or limit the general power of a court to enforce an order of the court by appropriate means.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.013. COSTS. The court may award costs in a proceeding to enforce a property division under this subchapter as in other civil cases.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.014. ATTORNEY'S FEES. The court may award reasonable attorney's fees in a proceeding under this subchapter. The court may order the attorney's fees to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order for fees in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 768 (S.B. 866), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2009.

SUBCHAPTER B. POST-DECREE QUALIFIED DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER

Sec. 9.101. JURISDICTION FOR QUALIFIED DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the court that rendered a final decree of divorce or annulment or another final order dividing property under this title retains continuing, exclusive jurisdiction to render an enforceable qualified domestic relations order or similar order permitting payment of pension, retirement plan, or other employee benefits divisible under the law of this state or of the United States to an alternate payee or other lawful payee.

(b) Unless prohibited by federal law, a suit seeking a qualified domestic relations order or similar order under this section applies to a previously divided pension, retirement plan, or other employee benefit divisible under the law of this state or of the United States, whether the plan or benefit is private, state, or federal.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.102. PROCEDURE. (a) A party to a decree of divorce or annulment may petition the court for a qualified domestic relations order or similar order.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this code, a petition under this subchapter is governed by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure that apply to the filing of an original lawsuit.

(c) Each party whose rights may be affected by the petition is entitled to receive notice by citation and shall be commanded to appear by filing a written answer.

(d) The proceedings shall be conducted in the same manner as civil cases generally.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.103. PRIOR FAILURE TO RENDER QUALIFIED DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER. A party may petition a court to render a qualified

domestic relations order or similar order if the court that rendered a final decree of divorce or annulment or another final order dividing property under this chapter did not provide a qualified domestic relations order or similar order permitting payment of benefits to an alternate payee or other lawful payee.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.104. DEFECTIVE PRIOR DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER. If a plan administrator or other person acting in an equivalent capacity determines that a domestic relations order does not satisfy the requirements of a qualified domestic relations order or similar order, the court retains continuing, exclusive jurisdiction over the parties and their property to the extent necessary to render a qualified domestic relations order.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.1045. AMENDMENT OF QUALIFIED DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER. (a) A court that renders a qualified domestic relations order retains continuing, exclusive jurisdiction to amend the order to correct the order or clarify the terms of the order to effectuate the division of property ordered by the court.

(b) An amended domestic relations order under this section must be submitted to the plan administrator or other person acting in an equivalent capacity to determine whether the amended order satisfies the requirements of a qualified domestic relations order. Section 9.104 applies to a domestic relations order amended under this section.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 481 (H.B. 248), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2005.

Sec. 9.105. LIBERAL CONSTRUCTION. The court shall liberally construe this subchapter to effect payment of retirement benefits that were divided by a previous decree that failed to contain a qualified domestic relations order or similar order or that contained an order that failed to meet the requirements of a qualified domestic relations order or similar order.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.106. ATTORNEY'S FEES. In a proceeding under this subchapter, the court may award reasonable attorney's fees incurred by a party to a divorce or annulment against the other party to the divorce or annulment. The court may order the attorney's fees to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order for fees in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 768 (S.B. 866), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2009.

SUBCHAPTER C. POST-DECREE DIVISION OF PROPERTY

Sec. 9.201. PROCEDURE FOR DIVISION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY NOT DIVIDED ON DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT. (a) Either former spouse may file a suit as provided by this subchapter to divide property not divided or awarded to a spouse in a final decree of divorce or annulment.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this subchapter, the suit is governed by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure applicable to the filing of an original lawsuit.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.202. LIMITATIONS. (a) A suit under this subchapter must be filed before the second anniversary of the date a former spouse unequivocally repudiates the existence of the ownership interest of the other former spouse and communicates that repudiation to the other former spouse.

(b) The two-year limitations period is tolled for the period that a court of this state does not have jurisdiction over the former spouses or over the property.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.203. DIVISION OF UNDIVIDED ASSETS WHEN PRIOR COURT HAD JURISDICTION. (a) If a court of this state failed to dispose of property subject to division in a final decree of divorce or annulment even though the court had jurisdiction over the spouses or over the property, the court shall divide the property in a

manner that the court deems just and right, having due regard for the rights of each party and any children of the marriage.

(b) If a final decree of divorce or annulment rendered by a court in another state failed to dispose of property subject to division under the law of that state even though the court had jurisdiction to do so, a court of this state shall apply the law of the other state regarding undivided property as required by Section 1, Article IV, United States Constitution (the full faith and credit clause), and enabling federal statutes.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.204. DIVISION OF UNDIVIDED ASSETS WHEN PRIOR COURT LACKED JURISDICTION. (a) If a court of this state failed to dispose of property subject to division in a final decree of divorce or annulment because the court lacked jurisdiction over a spouse or the property, and if that court subsequently acquires the requisite jurisdiction, that court may divide the property in a manner that the court deems just and right, having due regard for the rights of each party and any children of the marriage.

(b) If a final decree of divorce or annulment rendered by a court in another state failed to dispose of property subject to division under the law of that state because the court lacked jurisdiction over a spouse or the property, and if a court of this state subsequently acquires the requisite jurisdiction over the former spouses or over the property, the court in this state may divide the property in a manner that the court deems just and right, having due regard for the rights of each party and any children of the marriage.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.205. ATTORNEY'S FEES. In a proceeding to divide property previously undivided in a decree of divorce or annulment as provided by this subchapter, the court may award reasonable attorney's fees. The court may order the attorney's fees to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 768 (S.B. 866), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.

SUBCHAPTER D. DISPOSITION OF UNDIVIDED BENEFICIAL INTEREST

Sec. 9.301. PRE-DECREE DESIGNATION OF EX-SPOUSE AS BENEFICIARY OF LIFE INSURANCE. (a) If a decree of divorce or annulment is rendered after an insured has designated the insured's spouse as a beneficiary under a life insurance policy in force at the time of rendition, a provision in the policy in favor of the insured's former spouse is not effective unless:

(1) the decree designates the insured's former spouse as the beneficiary;

(2) the insured redesignates the former spouse as the beneficiary after rendition of the decree; or

(3) the former spouse is designated to receive the proceeds in trust for, on behalf of, or for the benefit of a child or a dependent of either former spouse.

(b) If a designation is not effective under Subsection (a), the proceeds of the policy are payable to the named alternative beneficiary or, if there is not a named alternative beneficiary, to the estate of the insured.

(c) An insurer who pays the proceeds of a life insurance policy issued by the insurer to the beneficiary under a designation that is not effective under Subsection (a) is liable for payment of the proceeds to the person or estate provided by Subsection (b) only if:

(1) before payment of the proceeds to the designated beneficiary, the insurer receives written notice at the home office of the insurer from an interested person that the designation is not effective under Subsection (a); and

(2) the insurer has not interpleaded the proceeds into the registry of a court of competent jurisdiction in accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.

Sec. 9.302. PRE-DECREE DESIGNATION OF EX-SPOUSE AS BENEFICIARY IN RETIREMENT BENEFITS AND OTHER FINANCIAL PLANS. (a) If a decree of divorce or annulment is rendered after a spouse, acting in the capacity of a participant, annuitant, or account holder, has designated the other spouse as a beneficiary under an individual retirement account, employee stock option plan, stock option, or other form of savings, bonus, profit-sharing, or other employer plan or financial plan of an employee or a participant in force at the time of rendition, the designating provision in the plan in favor of the other former spouse is not effective unless:

(1) the decree designates the other former spouse as the beneficiary;

(2) the designating former spouse redesignates the other former spouse as the beneficiary after rendition of the decree; or

(3) the other former spouse is designated to receive the proceeds or benefits in trust for, on behalf of, or for the benefit of a child or dependent of either former spouse.

(b) If a designation is not effective under Subsection (a), the benefits or proceeds are payable to the named alternative beneficiary or, if there is not a named alternative beneficiary, to the designating former spouse.

(c) A business entity, employer, pension trust, insurer, financial institution, or other person obligated to pay retirement benefits or proceeds of a financial plan covered by this section who pays the benefits or proceeds to the beneficiary under a designation of the other former spouse that is not effective under Subsection (a) is liable for payment of the benefits or proceeds to the person provided by Subsection (b) only if:

(1) before payment of the benefits or proceeds to the designated beneficiary, the payor receives written notice at the home office or principal office of the payor from an interested person that the designation of the beneficiary or fiduciary is not effective under Subsection (a); and

(2) the payor has not interpleaded the benefits or proceeds into the registry of a court of competent jurisdiction in

accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

(d) This section does not affect the right of a former spouse to assert an ownership interest in an undivided pension, retirement, annuity, or other financial plan described by this section as provided by this subchapter.

(e) This section does not apply to the disposition of a beneficial interest in a retirement benefit or other financial plan of a public retirement system as defined by Section [802.001](#), Government Code.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 7, Sec. 1, eff. April 17, 1997.