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## Principles of Client Service

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Bolhouse, Baar & Lefere is a team of dedicated attorneys, legal assistants and support staff committed to providing the highest quality legal representation possible to our clients. Our *Client Service Principles* are at the heart of all we do.

### *Integrity*

Every member of our firm promises to act in a professional and ethical manner and with integrity and honesty at all times.

### *Responsiveness*

We are prepared to meet your legal needs efficiently and in a timely manner to help you resolve your issues quickly. We promise to learn about you and your goals in an effort to make our attorney-client relationship a positive one.

### *Quality*

We are committed to excellence in everything we do and promise you the highest quality legal services possible.

### *Value*

The cost of our services is an important consideration for you and we promise to provide services at costs that are fair and reasonable.

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## Bolhouse, Baar & Lefere, P.C. Attorneys At Law

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### Family Law

## Bolhouse, Baar & Lefere, P.C.

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*Experience and Understanding*  
*When You Need it Most*

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Few events in life are as difficult and traumatic as a divorce. The family law attorneys at Bolhouse, Baar & Lefere have the experience, competence and compassion necessary to assist clients through the strenuous and painful divorce process.

We have a thorough understanding of the stress, anxiety and sense of loss clients feel throughout this process and are dedicated to providing the attentive, personal service that can help alleviate some of these pressures.

We have handled hundreds of divorces and are able to bring the invaluable experience gained in handling a wide variety of divorce cases to every client.

Our family law attorneys represent clients in all aspects of family law, including:

- Child Custody
  - Parenting Time
  - Spousal Support
  - Child Support
  - Separate Maintenance
  - Property Division
  - Pre/Post Nuptial Agreements
  - Paternity
  - Post-judgment Agreements
  - Adoption
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## ***THE DIVORCE PROCESS***

Following are the usual steps for most divorce cases in Michigan:

1. A **Divorce Complaint** is filed in Family Court (a division of the Circuit Court) in the county where the plaintiff and/or the defendant resides.
  2. A copy of the **Summons & Complaint** is served on the defendant. The defendant or the defendant's attorney can 'accept' service of process instead of personal service by a process server.
  3. The defendant must file an **Answer** to the complaint. If an Answer is not filed a default may be entered.
  4. The court allows time for **discovery**, which affords both parties the opportunity to secure relevant financial information and formulate parenting schedules.
  5. The parties engage in a time of **negotiation**, during which settlement proposals are exchanged. If the parties come to an agreement, a final judgment of divorce may be entered with the court, avoiding the need for trial.
  6. If the parties do not come to an agreement, a **trial** is scheduled to determine custody, parenting time, spousal support and a property settlement.
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## ***MICHIGAN LAW***

Michigan Law controls the following issues regarding divorce in Michigan.

### ***Grounds for Divorce***

Michigan is a "no-fault" divorce state, meaning that it is not necessary to prove that your spouse committed any wrongful act in order to be entitled to a divorce. The only thing necessary is for either party to feel that "there has been a breakdown of the marriage relationship." However, fault may be a factor in determining child custody, spousal support and property settlements.

### ***Time & Residency Requirements***

You must have lived in Michigan for 180 days and in the county for 10 days in order to obtain a divorce in Michigan. If there are no minor children, the court can grant a divorce 60 days after filing; 180 days if there are minor children.

### ***Regarding Children***

The court will consider many factors in determining custody, parenting time and support of a minor child/children, including each parties' relationship with and ability to provide for the child. The Friend of the Court will usually become involved to assist with these issues as well as to collect child support.

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