

Did you know?

Revised
August 2013

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

Many child support payments are paid on time and in full, but when enforcement measures are necessary, the federal and provincial governments can make it very difficult for people who owe money under support orders to avoid paying.

The provincial Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP) monitors the payment of maintenance orders and when necessary, takes steps to enforce payment. There is no cost to the recipient. See the Fact Sheet, "Enforcing Your Maintenance Order" for more information.

These measures put more pressure on people who have not paid their support obligations to pay the maintenance they owe.

What are these measures?

A person who has not kept up with payments:

- ◆ May be reported to a credit bureau.
- ◆ May have provincially-regulated pension benefits or federal payments such as EI taken.
- ◆ May have unpaid support payments enforced directly against a company they own or control.
- ◆ May have their wages taken.
- ◆ May have liens registered against their land or property.

- ◆ May be charged an annual default fee by the provincial government to help recover the costs of enforcement.
- ◆ May have driver's licence or passport withheld.
- ◆ May be traced through Canada Revenue Agency's data bank for information about residential addresses, and names and addresses of employers.

What should I do if I can't pay my child support order?

If your financial position has changed since your child support order was made, you should apply to the court to have your support payments reduced or stopped. Otherwise, your arrears (the amount you haven't paid) will continue to grow. You may be able to negotiate a voluntary payment schedule with FMEP on arrears; FMEP cannot reduce the amount of the court order.

If your original court order is registered in Family Court, you may not need a lawyer to apply to vary your child support order. For more information, visit the Legal Services Society's Family Law website at <http://familylaw.lss.bc.ca>. The FMEP website is <http://www.fmep.gov.bc.ca>.