

How to Survive the Alberta Maintenance Enforcement Program (The M.E.P.)

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1. Make sure you have a binder with all your family law documents organized with tabs.
2. That binder should contain a copy of your most current court order.
3. Know the terms of your court order.
4. Make and keep payment obligations with the M.E.P., preferably through direct debit or voluntary support deduction through your employer. Continue to make maintenance payments, even if court ordered parenting time schedules are disobeyed by the support recipient. Keep a separate account, preferably at a separate bank from the one you normally use. They can, and will, seize your account if you fall behind.
5. Don't make payments directly to the support recipient. Direct payments may not be credited to your M.E.P. account, resulting in unwarranted collection actions against you. If you are making voluntary payments with an informal agreement, get receipts! Make sure they are dated and include a notation that the money is for CHILD SUPPORT! This may be your only recourse to prove that you have been trying to maintain your obligations.
6. Contact the M.E.P. if you believe your dependents are no longer eligible for maintenance or if you become the main residential parent. Take legal action promptly to change court orders to reflect changes in residency/custody of children. Always ensure that your most current order is the one they have on file.
7. Keep your personal information, address, phone numbers and employer information current with the M.E.P.
8. If your court ordered maintenance is beyond your ability to pay, due to changes in your personal financial circumstances, seek legal advice and contact the M.E.P. in writing of your material change in circumstances. Phone them. Keep on it until you are able to get a revised order.
9. Submit a detailed statement of finances in order to establish a fair and equitable payment plan with the M.E.P.
10. Keep detailed records of matters in your binder related to your court orders and maintenance account.
11. Keep your cool! The Maintenance Enforcement Program has a zero tolerance policy in relation to profanity, raised voices and threats of any type.

12. Implement your own Zero Tolerance policy. Audio record your conversations with M.E.P. employees. If you are a party to the conversations, you may supplement your notes electronically by means of the use of an audio recording device. Always get the identity of any persons you speak with at the M.E.P. when you call. They may provide their first name only. Ask them what department or other identifying information they can provide.

If called by someone who claims they are calling from the M.E.P., ask them for their identity, position and call back information with extension number. If they refuse, hang up and write a letter to the director stating that someone called you who identified themselves as an M.E.P. employee and refused to be called back in order for you to verify that you were talking with an employee of the M.E.P. and not some collection agency or criminal seeking information to commit identity theft. Ask questions and if they are not answered directly or are avoided, state politely that your question wasn't answered or wasn't answered completely. Upon 3 requests, politely state that they have refused to provide a reasonable answer and ask for their supervisor or tell them you are terminating the call and hang up.

Then make a written complaint to the director. You deserve to be treated in the same manner that M.E.P. employees want to be treated. Send us a copy of your signed written complaint to the director about how you were treated.

13. Put it in writing. Provide your written position and written confirmations of telephone calls and meetings with the M.E.P. If they disagree with your summary of the facts stated in the conversation, as provided in your letter, they can write you back and explain their position.

14. Periodically check the [Maintenance Enforcement Program website](#) for changes and current information. You are also able to access your account information there. Check it periodically to be sure a \$25 late fee isn't compounding and putting you into arrears.

15. Keep a log, which should include info on all phone calls - the time, a name and the details of each conversation.

16. We can't give you legal advice. Review the above actions and the full facts of your case with a lawyer who can provide you with legal information and advise you about varying court ordered child maintenance orders appropriately. Also see our [Disclaimer](#)