



FEDERAL CIRCUIT
AND FAMILY COURT
OF AUSTRALIA
DIVISION 1 | DIVISION 2

Information sheet for Parties – Lighthouse risk screening

Lighthouse is an innovative approach taken by the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia to screen for risk, with a primary focus on improving outcomes for families.



Lighthouse risk screening

Lighthouse involves:

- early, confidential risk screening through a secure online platform
- early identification and management of safety concerns, and
- triage and assessment of cases by a highly specialised team who direct appropriate resources and provide safe and suitable case management.

What is meant by ‘risk screening’?

- Risk screening refers to the process taken to identify the likelihood of harm or exposure to a type of harm (child abuse and neglect, family violence, mental health issues and drug or alcohol misuse) experienced by a party or child in family law proceedings. This process involves completing an online risk screening questionnaire called the Family DOORS Triage¹.
- The Family DOORS Triage questionnaire can be completed safely and securely on your computer, tablet, or mobile phone. Although we ask that you complete the questionnaire, it is voluntary for you to do so. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
- Completing the risk screen when you file your documents at the commencement of your case, assists the Court in determining the most appropriate case management pathway for your family and identify any additional support that might assist in managing serious concerns for you or your children.

What happens to my risk screen?

- A member of the Lighthouse Team will view the answers to your completed risk screen to assist in triaging your case according to risk. In some cases, a Triage Counsellor will be allocated to undertake further review and assessment of the risk identified. Other parties in your case will not be provided with your answers. The Judge, Senior Judicial Registrar, Judicial Registrar or other judicial officer presiding over your case will not be able to see your answers.
- Your answers are **confidential and cannot be used as evidence in your case or used against you by the other party** under the *Family Law Act 1975*.

How will this affect my case?

- If you are filing or responding to a family law parenting only or parenting and financial matter at the Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Canberra, Dandenong, Darwin, Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne, Newcastle, Parramatta, Rockhampton, Sydney, Townsville and Wollongong family law registries, you will be asked to complete the Family DOORS Triage online risk screening questionnaire.
- The questionnaire enables the Court to identify any risks you or your child/ren may be experiencing. After the questionnaire is completed, the Court are able to place cases onto an appropriate case management pathway, according to the risk level identified.
- If the questionnaire is not completed by either party, your case will be managed in accordance with the [Central Practice Direction – Family Law Case Management](#).

¹ The DOORS Triage Tool, McIntosh, J.E. 2020, Revised 2022 with contributions by the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (FCFOA).

How does the triage process work?

- The answers provided in your questionnaire guide the Court on the most appropriate case management pathway for your case.
- A dedicated team within the Court will offer tailored support to you based on the level of risk identified.

What does the risk category mean for my case?

- **High risk cases** receive early attention through an in depth Case File Review and if required, a 30 minute telephone appointment with a Triage Counsellor, who will conduct a follow-up risk assessment, develop a safety and wellbeing plan for you and offer referrals to support services. The Triage Counsellor may assist in ensuring that you can attend court safely and enable the development of safety plans. Your matter may also be referred to an Evatt Judicial Registrar for consideration for the [Evatt List](#).
- **Medium and lower risk cases** are offered online safety planning and service referrals as part of the Family DOORS Triage risk screening process and are considered for a range of case management pathways in accordance with the [Central Practice Direction – Family Law Case Management](#).

What is the Evatt List?

- The [Evatt List](#) is a specialist list, which involves early information gathering and active case management for serious high risk matters.
- Your case may be allocated to the Evatt List if:
 - your case is filed at a relevant family law registry
 - your court documents seek parenting orders only or parenting and financial orders
 - either party in your case has completed the Family DOORS Triage risk screening questionnaire
 - the case has been reviewed by a Triage Counsellor, and
 - the Evatt Judicial Registrar has reviewed

the case and determined it is appropriate for allocation to the Evatt List.

- If you are allocated to the Evatt List, a formal Court Order will be made notifying you of this allocation. If you do not receive a formal Court Order, your Court date originally allocated and case management pathway will remain the same unless otherwise advised by the Court.

All Court Orders are accessible via the Commonwealth Courts Portal – www.comcourts.gov.au

How will my case be affected if I am in the Evatt List?

- As the Evatt List is designed for serious high risk cases, it is resource intensive and involves gathering information from state courts, child welfare authorities, police and other relevant bodies.
- If your case is allocated to the Evatt List, you will receive more active case management from a dedicated team involving Judges, Senior Judicial Registrars, Evatt Judicial Registrars, Court Child Experts, and court staff.



More information

The following resources are available on the Court's website: www.fcfoa.gov.au

- **The Lighthouse:** www.fcfoa.gov.au/lighthouse
- **Safety at court plans:** [Do you have fears for your safety when attending court?](#)
- **Family dispute resolution:** [Dispute Resolution in Family Law Proceedings](#).
- **The Evatt List:** [Guide for parties in the Federal Circuit and Family Court Evatt List](#).