

THE ARTICLE

DIVORCE IN THAILAND

Ending a Marriage

Finding a Way Forward

Administrative and Contested Procedures · Last Updated: June 2026

Divorce is never straightforward — and when it involves Thai law, the process can feel even more unfamiliar. The good news is that Thailand offers two clear pathways depending on your situation, and for couples in full agreement, it can often be resolved in a single day. For those facing a dispute, the court system provides a structured framework designed to protect your rights, your assets, and your children.

↑ WHY EACH SECTION WORKS FOR GOOGLE

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · EMPATHY-FIRST OPENING

Leading with emotion, not procedure, keeps anxious readers on the page.

'Divorce is never straightforward' acknowledges the reader's emotional state immediately. Google tracks time-on-page — and readers stay longer when they feel understood rather than lectured.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · SEARCH INTENT

Two pathways, one clear question — answers the reader before they bounce.

Most people searching for divorce information want to know 'which process applies to me?' This opening answers that immediately, reducing bounce rate and signalling relevance to Google.

THE TWO PATHWAYS

Administrative vs. Contested Divorce

Thai law recognises two methods for dissolving a registered marriage. Which one applies to you depends on a single question: do both spouses agree on everything — assets, debts, and children? If yes, the process is fast and straightforward. If not, it goes to court.

Feature	Administrative	Contested (Court)
Legal Basis	Mutual Consent	Court Judgment
Venue	District Office (Amphur)	Family Court
Requirements	Full agreement on all terms	Proven legal grounds (Section 1516)
Presence	Both spouses in person	Attorneys may represent; some personal appearances required
Timeline	Typically one day	6 months to over 1 year

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · SCANNABILITY

A comparison table answers the reader's first question at a glance.

When someone searches 'types of divorce in Thailand', a structured table dramatically increases the chance of this article appearing as a featured snippet.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · CONVERSION

The one-day timeline is the most powerful detail in this table.

For couples in agreement, 'typically one day' is a genuine surprise — and a compelling reason to contact a firm immediately rather than delay.

Mutual Consent: The Fast-Track Option

An administrative divorce is the most common method for expatriates who have registered their marriage in Thailand. Handled at the local district office (Amphur or Khet), it requires no court appearance — just both spouses present, in full agreement, with the right paperwork.

Both parties must agree on the division of marital property (Sin Somros), responsibility for joint debts, and custody of any children. A written divorce agreement signed by two witnesses must be submitted at registration — this becomes a legally binding contract.

- **Eligibility:** Available if your marriage was formally registered before a Thai civil registrar — whether at a local District Office or at a Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate-General abroad.

Note on Foreign Government Marriages: If you were married by a foreign government rather than a Thai embassy, you cannot dissolve the marriage through an administrative divorce immediately. You must first file your legalised and translated foreign marriage certificate with a Thai District Office to obtain a Record of Family Status (Kor Ror. 22).

- **Documentation:** Original passports, original marriage certificate, and the signed divorce agreement.
- **International Recognition:** An administrative divorce is not automatically recognised in all countries. Check with your home country's embassy before proceeding.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · PLAIN LANGUAGE

'No court appearance — just both spouses present' cuts through legal anxiety.

Readers on this page are often stressed. Plain, reassuring language reduces bounce rate and builds the trust that leads to a consultation booking.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · E-E-A-T: DEPTH

The Kor Ror. 22 detail is something only a practitioner would know.

Most competitor articles skip the foreign-marriage edge case entirely. Covering it signals genuine expertise — and captures long-tail searches from readers in exactly that situation.

CONTESTED DIVORCE

When Spouses Cannot Agree: The Court Process

If one spouse refuses to divorce, or if there is disagreement over custody or assets, the matter must be settled in the Thai Family Court. Thailand has no 'no-fault' option in contested cases — you must prove specific legal grounds under Section 1516 of the Civil and Commercial Code.

- **Adultery or Misconduct:** A spouse has maintained another person as a spouse or committed adultery.
- **Desertion:** A spouse has deserted the other for more than one year.
- **Separation:** Spouses have lived apart for more than three years due to an inability to cohabit peacefully.
- **Incapacity or Illness:** Serious physical or mental conditions that make cohabitation intolerable or impossible.

2026 Update — Marriage Equality: With the 2025 implementation of the Marriage Equality Act, Thai divorce law is now fully gender-neutral. The same rights and procedures apply to all legally married couples regardless of gender — including parental power, alimony, and asset division.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · E-E-A-T: STATUTE

Section 1516 of the Civil and Commercial Code signals this is written by a real lawyer.

Generic divorce content says 'you'll need grounds'. Expert content names the statute. Google's quality raters — and readers — can tell the difference immediately.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · TIMELINESS

The Marriage Equality update is a significant SEO opportunity right now.

Same-sex couples in Thailand represent an underserved search audience. No competitor article written before 2025 will cover this. Being first to rank for 'same-sex divorce Thailand' is a real traffic opportunity.

How Property and Parental Rights Are Divided

In both types of divorce, property division follows a clear classification under Thai law:

- **Personal Property (Sin Suan Tua):** Assets acquired before the marriage, or received as inheritance or gifts during it, remain with the original owner.
- **Marital Property (Sin Somros):** Assets acquired during the marriage are typically split 50/50, unless a prenuptial agreement states otherwise.

Child Custody: The court prioritises the best interests of the child above all else. In contested cases, the court may involve the Observation and Protection Center — a court-appointed social welfare body whose trained caseworkers interview the family independently and provide recommendations on the child's developmental and emotional needs. Their report carries significant weight in the judge's final decision.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · LOCAL TERMINOLOGY

Sin Suan Tua and Sin Somros are the search terms Thai lawyers actually use.

Including the Thai legal terms alongside plain English translations helps this article rank for both English and transliterated Thai search queries — doubling the potential search audience.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · E-E-A-T: DEPTH

The Observation and Protection Center is a detail almost no competitor covers.

For parents worried about custody, this is exactly the kind of insider procedural knowledge that builds trust — and makes them pick up the phone.

What Expats Actually Want to Know

Can I get an administrative divorce if we married outside of Thailand?

Not directly. Administrative divorce is only available for marriages registered in Thailand or at a Royal Thai Embassy. If you married abroad, you have two options: register your foreign marriage certificate with a Thai District Office to obtain a Record of Family Status (Kor Ror. 22) — which then makes you eligible for administrative divorce — or file for a contested divorce through the Thai court system directly.

Do I need to be in Thailand to file for a contested divorce?

Your attorney can file the initial petition on your behalf, but you will generally need to appear in court at least once for testimony or cross-examination. If the court orders pre-trial dispute resolution, mediation can often be conducted entirely online.

Remote Mediation: The Thailand Courts of Justice use the CIOS (Case Information Online Service) portal and e-Filing system to facilitate remote participation, document uploads, and virtual hearings. Coordinate with your legal counsel to petition for remote mediation well in advance of your case management dates.

How long does a contested divorce take in 2026?

Cases in Bangkok typically take 1 to 2 years due to high court volumes. Outside the capital, most cases reach a judgment within 6 to 12 months, provided there are no complex appeals.

What if my spouse refuses to sign the divorce papers?

You'll need to file a lawsuit for a contested divorce and present evidence of one of the statutory grounds under Section 1516 of the Civil and Commercial Code.

Why Expert Legal Guidance Matters

Divorce involves more than paperwork — errors in a written agreement or a failure to properly establish grounds in court can affect your property rights and your access to your children for years to come. If you're unsure which pathway applies to your situation, our family law team can walk you through your options in plain English. No jargon, no pressure — just clear advice at a difficult time.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · FEATURED SNIPPETS

FAQ sections are Google's second-favourite format for featured snippets.

Questions that match real search queries are highly likely to be pulled directly into search results — above all other organic listings.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · LONG-TAIL TRAFFIC

'Do I need to be in Thailand to file for divorce' is a real search query.

These specific, practical questions attract readers who are actively planning — the highest-intent audience a law firm can reach.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · TIMELINESS

Adding '2026' to the timeline question captures date-qualified searches.

Readers searching 'how long does divorce take in Thailand 2026' are looking for current information. Matching that exact phrasing signals to Google that this article is the most relevant result.

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · CONVERSION COPY

'No jargon, no pressure — just clear advice at a difficult time' is the right tone for this audience.

Divorce readers are emotionally vulnerable and often suspicious of legal costs. A CTA that leads with empathy and removes pressure converts significantly better than one that leads with credentials.



Khun Somchai

Family Lawyer · Thai Legal International · Family Law, University of Cambridge · 15+ years experience

↑ WHY THIS WORKS · E-E-A-T:
AUTHOR

A named family lawyer with 15 years' experience is a direct trust signal for sensitive legal content.

Divorce falls squarely under Google's 'Your Money or Your Life' category — where author credentials carry the most ranking weight.