

Overview of Supervised Visitation

The public policy of the State of Idaho is to protect the best interests of children whose parents have a custody or visitation matter within the family courts. Sometimes, based on issues of protection and safety, a judge will decide that in order for a child to have contact with a parent, a neutral third person must be present during any visitation. This type of third-person visitation arrangement is often called “Supervised Visitation” for many reasons:

- To give the visiting parent a chance to address specific issues,
- To help reintroduce a parent after a long absence,
- To help introduce a parent and a child when there has been no existing relationship between the parent and child,
- When there is a history or allegations of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, or substance abuse,
- When there are parenting concerns or mental illness, and
- When there is a parental threat of abduction.

The court order will specify the time and duration of the visits. Sometimes, the court order will also specify who the provider is to be and where the visits are to take place. There are three types of supervised visitation providers:

- The non-professional provider,
- The professional provider, and
- The therapeutic provider.

The professional and therapeutic providers usually charge a fee for services and are experienced and trained to provide supervised visitation services. The non-professional provider is usually a family member or friend who does not provide supervised visitation services. Your court order will usually say which type of provider you have to use to supervise these visits. The provider is there to make every effort to keep your child safe and support your child in enjoying the visit with the supervised parent. Whether a paid professional, family member, or friend, the provider’s job is to make sure that the children involved in the visits are safe and free from any unnecessary stress. The provider must be present at all times during the visit, listen to what is being said, and pay close attention to the child’s behavior. If necessary, the provider may interrupt or end a visit. For more information visit the Supervised Visitation Network. For information on providers contact the Family Court Services office at (208) 735-4307. The Idaho Rules of Family Law Procedure 717.