

New York's Domestic Relations Statutes

§ 235. Information as to details of matrimonial actions or proceedings.

1. An officer of the court with whom the proceedings in a matrimonial action or a written agreement of separation or an action or proceeding for custody, visitation or maintenance of a child are filed, or before whom the testimony is taken, or his clerk, either before or after the termination of the suit, shall not permit a copy of any of the pleadings, affidavits, findings of fact, conclusions of law, judgment of dissolution, written agreement of separation or memorandum thereof, or testimony, or any examination or perusal thereof, to be taken by any other person than a party, or the attorney or counsel of a party, except by order of the court.

2. If the evidence on the trial of such an action or proceeding be such that public interest requires that the examination of the witnesses should not be public, the court or referee may exclude all persons from the room except the parties to the action and their counsel, and in such case may order the evidence, when filed with the clerk, sealed up, to be exhibited only to the parties to the action or proceeding or someone interested, on order of the court.

3. Upon the application of any person to the county clerk or other officer in charge of public records within a county for evidence of the disposition, judgment or order with respect to a matrimonial action, the clerk or other such officer shall issue a "certificate of disposition", duly certifying the nature and effect of such disposition, judgment or order and shall in no manner evidence the subject matter of the pleadings, testimony, findings of fact, conclusions of law or judgment of dissolution derived in any such action.

4 Any county, city, town or village clerk or other municipal official issuing marriage licenses shall be required to accept, as evidence of dissolution of marriage, such "certificate of disposition" in lieu of a complete copy of the findings of fact, conclusions of law and judgment of dissolution. 5. The limitations of subdivisions one, two and three of this section in relation to confidentiality shall cease to apply one hundred years after date of filing, and such records shall thereupon be public records available to public inspection.