

**600.3 Commencement of adoption action — jurisdiction — forum non conveniens.**

1. An action for the adoption of any natural person shall be commenced by the filing of an adoption petition, as prescribed in [section 600.5](#), in the juvenile court or court of the county in which an adult person to be adopted is domiciled or resides, or in the juvenile court or court of the county in which the guardian of a minor person to be adopted or the petitioner is domiciled or resides.

2. *a.* An adoption petition shall not be filed until a termination of parental rights has been accomplished except in the following cases:

(1) No termination of parental rights is required if the person to be adopted is an adult.

(2) If the stepparent of the child to be adopted is the adoption petitioner, the parent-child relationship between the child and the parent who is not the spouse of the petitioner may be terminated as part of the adoption proceeding by the filing of that parent's consent to the adoption.

(3) A termination of parental rights order is not required prior to the filing of an adoption petition if the adoption is a standby adoption as defined in [section 600.14A](#).

*b.* For the purposes of [this subsection](#), a consent to adopt recognized by the juvenile courts or courts of another jurisdiction in the United States and obtained from a resident of that jurisdiction shall be accepted in this state in lieu of a termination of parental rights proceeding.

*c.* Any adoption proceeding pending on or completed prior to July 1, 1978, is hereby legalized and validated to the extent that it is consistent with [this subsection](#).

3. If upon filing of the adoption petition or at any later time in the adoption action the juvenile court or court finds that in the interest of substantial justice the adoption action should be conducted in another juvenile court or court, it may transfer, stay, or dismiss the adoption action on any conditions that are just.

4. An adoption petition shall be limited to the adoption of one natural person.

[R60, §2600; C73, §2307; C97, §3250; C24, §10496; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b1; C39, §10501.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.1; C77, 79, 81, §600.3]

[2000 Acts, ch 1145, §3](#); [2001 Acts, ch 57, §2](#); [2007 Acts, ch 71, §1](#)

Referred to in [§600.4](#), [§600.5](#), [§600.12A](#), [§602.8105](#)