
Pre-Divorce Checklist

- Consult with a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst to determine financial issues of divorce.
- Determine whether to hire an attorney, a mediator, or to file pro se.
- If you hire an attorney and discuss who will pay legal fees.
- Inventory all property, real and personal, and note the form of title in which all such property is held. Review your state's laws on property distribution.
- Make copies of statements of all investments and qualified and non-qualified retirement plans of both parties. Discuss with a financial advisor your entitlement to benefits and issues surrounding division of plans.
- Make a list of all income and expenses. Such information will be needed for court records.
- Review all policies of life, health, and disability coverage. Modify coverages as required by divorce, and alter beneficiary designations as appropriate. Follow through on any action required by the divorce decree, e.g., one parent's duty to maintain health coverage on children of the marriage. Examine other health insurance coverage options (e.g. COBRA) should your health insurance be provided under your spouse's insurance and terminate upon divorce.
- Review all marital and personal debt, and all grounds for potential liability, and negotiate responsibility for payment as part of the marital dissolution. Order credit reports to determine each spouse's responsibility for each debt.
- Make a decision on your filing status on your income tax return.
- Revoke or modify any power of attorney or appointment of health care representative if former spouse has been designated.
- If children are involved, discuss visitation and custody issues. Determine who pays for the child's medical expenses, education and other incidentals. Calculate the extent of child support that may be needed.
- Review and change wills, trusts, business buyout agreements, and related personal planning documents as appropriate.

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- When negotiating property alimony payments, child support payments, and property division, consider any income tax consequences that may derive from proposed settlements.
- Revoke authorized users with respect to credit card and charge accounts; consider changing PINs.
- Women whose surname changes as a result of divorce should have personal documents reissued in the new surname.
- Examine how Social Security benefits may be affected.