

Pre-Divorce Checklist

- Hire a lawyer you can trust. This person should make you feel comfortable and look after your interests.
- Gather and give to your attorney copies of your financial records, including tax returns, pay stubs and investments. Make sure you keep a copy for your records.
- Gather and give to your attorney copies of documents related to ownership of property and personal belongings. Know whose name is on the title for any houses, land, cars, boats, or other vehicles.
- Discuss with your lawyer the timeline of what has to happen and when and keep a running calendar of important dates and documents or appearances that are required of you.
- Open separate checking and credit accounts. Separate your paychecks from your spouse's as soon as possible. Stop direct deposits into joint accounts.
- Work on making important decisions regarding children as quickly as possible.
- Revise your will. Be sure to put in provisions for any children in your custody upon the event of your death.
- If you need to, acquire your own health insurance.
- Make a detailed list of monthly expenses for yourself and your household.
- Open a post office box or private mailbox to receive sensitive mail.
- Get a copy of your credit report.
- Change passwords on your email accounts or get new email accounts.
- Revoke authorized users with respect to credit card and charge accounts and consider changing PINs.
- Open a cell phone account in your name.
- Store your valuables in a safe location.
- Start keeping a journal. Keep a detailed, fair and balanced record of events including arguments, visitation, financial transactions, and any information relevant to the divorce. Keep the journal in a safe place.
- Gather together a support system.