

# Divorce planning checklist

**Note:** This checklist does not constitute legal advice. You should consult a qualified divorce planning attorney to fairly represent your interests in your particular case.

## Before filing for divorce:

- Consider hiring an experienced divorce attorney. An attorney can help:
  - Fairly represent your interests
  - Negotiate a fair settlement
  - Draft and file important documents
  - Navigate court hearings
- Review your estate planning documents with your attorney and consider updating your will and powers of attorney to remove your current spouse as executor and/or agent
- Gather personal information:
  - Birthdays, social security numbers
  - Marriage date and location
  - Official separation date and grounds for divorce
- Locate financial information:
  - Current employment information and income of both spouses
  - Assets and liabilities of each spouse, including:
    - Up-to-date financial statements
    - Ownership titling
    - Tax basis
  - Insurance policies (life, health, disability, etc.)
- Consider purchasing a P.O. box for confidential mail communications
- Change passwords on personal online accounts
- Request credit reports and check for accuracy ([www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com))

## During the divorce:

- Budget for new expenses during the divorce; set new personal and financial goals
  - Consult a tax advisor about your particular case and ask for help understanding special tax treatment that may apply to your divorce settlement, including:
    - Taxation of alimony and child support
    - Credits and deductions
    - Your filing status
    - Division of retirement assets
  - Working with your divorce attorney, consider whether your divorce settlement will include insurance provisions, including:
    - Can the divorce decree allow me to benefit from insurance protection on my ex-spouse, including life and disability coverage?
    - How will health insurance coverage be handled?
  - Consider hiring a counselor to help navigate the emotional burden of divorce – health insurance may help cover costs
  - Consider consulting with a Social Security expert who can help explore income options as an ex-spouse
- ## After the divorce is finalized:
- Review and modify any beneficiary designations in accordance with the divorce decree
  - As needed, notify important parties of the divorce, including banks, creditors, homeowners and auto insurance companies, etc.
  - Work with your attorney to draft any new estate planning documents, including deeds, wills, and/or powers of attorney

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