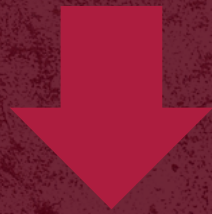


**CONTEMPLATING
DIVORCE?**



12 ACTION ITEMS

**TO START PROTECTING YOUR
INTERESTS IN 2026**



CURRAN MOHER WEIS
Attorneys Dedicated to Family Law

Divorce is never easy. It can feel overwhelming to know where to begin. As difficult as it may be, it's important to take clear and decisive steps right away to position yourself for the best possible outcome.

To get you started, we have compiled a list of action items appropriate for most cases. Naturally, each case is unique and this list is provided for information purposes only. We encourage you to speak frankly with any attorney you select and discuss the items below and any other actions you intend to take in conjunction with your divorce.



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1. **Begin keeping a journal or log of divorce-related events.**

This may later prove to be a useful tool for refreshing your recollection as to certain events, dates, verbal exchanges, etc. Many clients also find the process cathartic and helpful for keeping an appropriate perspective. Stick to the facts only, as this may later be shown to the court.
2. **Discretely remove irreplaceable items from your home.**

Appropriate irreplaceable items to remove would include small family heirlooms, photos, letters, or other items of high sentimental/emotional value. This removal is for preservation purposes only; we are preventing your spouse from doing something with those items he/she may later regret.
3. **Itemize your belongings.**

If personal property such as furniture is going to be a significant issue in your case, take a picture of each room in your home with an eye toward capturing all relevant items for later distribution. You may also want to make a list of the property. Keep in mind that your personal property may have limited importance or value, but it does have some replacement value; if you are the party to leave the marital home, you will need a bed to sleep in, table to eat at, etc.
4. **Change your passwords.**

Change the passwords on all electronic items or accounts of importance, including the password to your phone(s), email accounts, online bank accounts, and social media accounts. You may also want to change your password recovery questions to something your spouse won't know. Remove your spouse's ability to track your location if that is enabled. Also, consider setting up a separate email account to be used only for email exchanges with your attorney about divorce-related subject matter. If you share a phone plan, consider moving your device to an individual account to prevent your spouse from accessing call records, text logs, or authentication codes.
5. **Change the way you communicate with your spouse on divorce-related issues.**

Email communication is always preferable. When communicating by email, keep in mind that anything you put in writing may be read by a judge, so refrain for using profanity, sarcasm, or aggressive and insulting language. BIFF is a good acronym for email communications: be Brief, Informative, Friendly and Firm. Avoid admonishments and apologies. When in doubt about the appropriateness of an email, don't send it. If you are concerned about your ability to properly draft an important email, allow your attorney to help. Text messaging is fine for minor logistical issues (e.g. "I'll be 10 minutes late"), but not good for in-depth discussions. Have those over email.
6. **Limit your social media use.**

Limit your use of social media websites such a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat where you might be inclined to post pictures or comments that are counter-productive to your litigation efforts. Also, closely review the existing content on such sites as well as those of your friends, connections, links, etc. to ensure they are consistent with your litigation goals.

- 7. **Get your own finances in order.**

Open a separate checking account and secure sufficient funding for your separate living expense and attorney's fees if possible. Also, be cognizant of the balances of jointly titled bank accounts as those monies can typically be withdrawn in full by either party. The same is true (in reverse) of jointly titled credit cards. Review and identify all subscription services, auto-payments, and shared digital purchases (such as Amazon, Apple, or Google accounts) to determine which should be cancelled, separated, or preserved for documentation.

- 8. **Complete a detailed family financial disclosure.**

Gather sufficient information to provide your attorney with as complete a family financial disclosure as possible. Financial account statements are most important as they will likely provide sufficient information to allow your attorney to issue a document subpoena. Accumulating this information during the pre-divorce stage or early-divorce stage will significantly lower your costs and increase the likelihood of having an accurate picture of the family's assets for settlement purposes. If you possessed substantial assets prior to the marriage, it is also quite important that you obtain statements reflecting the value(s) of those assets on the date of your marriage.

- 9. **Gather other important documents.**

Documents such as tax returns, titles, passports, immigration papers, insurance policies, and health information can also be useful or necessary in the divorce process. Get these together now.

- 10. **Preserve Important Digital Communications**

Text messages, social media messages, and other digital communications can become important evidence later. Before devices are reset or accounts change, export and save any messages, call logs, voicemails, or relevant communication threads from services such as iMessage, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, or other platforms you use regularly. Save backups in a secure location such as a private cloud folder or separate device. Do not edit or manipulate the content in any way; simply preserve it as it currently exists.

- 11. **Do not involve your children.**

Do not discuss the details of your divorce with your children and do not involve them in the process in any way.

- 12. **Secure Your Digital Footprint**

Review and adjust the settings on any AI-enabled or internet-connected devices, including smart speakers, security cameras, doorbell cameras, thermostats, and vehicle tracking systems. Ensure that shared location services, shared cloud accounts, and app-based home controls (such as Alexa, Google Home, Ring, Nest, Apple Home, or similar systems) are restricted so your spouse cannot continue to monitor your movements, access your files, or view recordings. This step is for privacy and safety only; do not alter or delete any information that may be considered evidence.



CURRAN MOHER WEIS

Attorneys Dedicated to Family Law

To protect your future, you need a reliable and experienced Virginia family law attorney to strongly represent your interests. The attorneys and staff at Curran Moher Weis are committed to helping you through life's difficult transitions. We are experienced in all facets of family law and divorce, and our team has a specific strength in complex divorce litigation for cases that require it.

**Discuss your situation
with an expert.**

Request a Consultation:

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