

Things to Do After You've Reached an Agreement

There are several things you'll need to do after you have reached an agreement, some of which you can start even before the court enters your final judgment of divorce. This checklist includes some of those things; you and your individual attorney, account, or other advisors may have additional things to add.

Case Status: The court often runs 4 months behind in processing judgments. If you'd like to check the status of the entry of Judgment in your case, you can do so online at www.lasuperiorcourt.org (provided your case was filed in Los Angeles County). Under "Family ", click "Case summaries" and scroll to the bottom of the page, then type in your case number (found on the first page of each form of your divorce paperwork). If you haven't heard from us or the court 5 months after your paperwork has been sent to court, please contact our office.

Paperwork Copies: Put all of your divorce papers in a safe, clearly labeled place. You never know when you'll need an additional copy of the Notice of Entry of Judgment or Judgment itself. If you ever need additional copies of the paperwork, they are available from the court where your judgment was entered. We usually file papers with the Los Angeles Superior Court, Central Civil Courthouse, 111 N. Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The file room is # 112.

Now that your case is closed, we will retain your file for 5 years. Our office policy is to keep copies of your documents, not originals, so if you believe we have any of your originals, please let us know immediately so we can return them to you. If you would like your file returned to you after 5 years, please keep us informed of your current address so we can send it to you. If you do not request the return of your file, or if we are unable to locate you at your last known address, we will destroy your file after 5 years.

QDRO's: Have any necessary Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (QDRO's) prepared and signed by the court. QDRO's are for divisions of pensions and retirement plans. If you're not sure if you need one, take a look at your agreement (Stipulated Judgment). Peace Talks outsources QDRO's, typically to Pension Appraisers, www.pensionappraisers.com. Once the QDRO is prepared, don't forget to have it signed by the court and have it served (usually sent by certified mail) on the retirement plan administrator. We can do this for you for an hourly fee if you hire us to do so, or you can do it on your own. This is not included in the regular mediation fees or flat fee paper charges.

If you're doing an IRA rollover, a QDRO isn't usually required, but there is still paperwork which needs to be filled out with the financial institution.



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Retirement Beneficiaries: Change any beneficiaries on your retirement plans, 401(k) plans, or IRA's, as well as any other accounts which have beneficiaries, such as pay-on-death bank accounts.

Accounts: Close any joint credit cards, even if they have zero balances.

Close any joint bank accounts and stock accounts.

Make sure each person's utilities are in their own name alone.

House Deeds: Finish any paperwork required concerning your residence, whether it's a refinance or title transfer or deed of trust for any settlement monies which are to be paid later. If any title transfer is required (husband to wife, wife to husband), make sure the escrow company is aware so that they can do the transfer deeds.

Insurance: Let your car insurance and health insurance company know that your divorce has been finalized.

Put into place any required life insurance, or change any life insurance beneficiaries as required by the Judgment.

DMV: Transfer automobile or other vehicle titles and registrations, if necessary.

Change of Name: If you've changed your name within the divorce, be sure to notify the IRS, Social Security, DMV, passport office, insurance companies, credit card companies, etc. of your name change. You can use your Notice of Entry of Judgment, if it states that your name has changed, to prove your name has changed. Otherwise, use a filed-stamped copy of your Judgment (just the 2nd cover page).

Estate Planning: Have an estate planning attorney draft a new Will and Trust for you. Divorce invalidates any previous estate plans you had in place.

Financial Planning: This is a good time to meet with your financial planner or accountant to talk about your financial future and tax filing status if you haven't already done so.

Taxes: You may want to get a copy of IRS publication 504, available free at www.irs.gov, which covers divorce tax issues. If you are claiming your children as a dependent on your taxes, you may need to have the other parent sign IRS form 8332, also available at www.irs.gov.



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Record Keeping: Keep track of all child support and spousal support payments (paid and received). Keep a record of all of the children's doctor visits and insurance statements of benefits, and contact the child's school(s) to update your contact information.