



SCHOONMAKERGEORGE
Blomberg Bryniczka & Welsh P.C.
A FAMILY & MATRIMONIAL LAW FIRM

DIVORCE CONSULT GUIDE

Preparing for your first meeting with a family law attorney can help you make the most of your consultation. This guide outlines key topics to think through beforehand, questions worth asking, and information that will help your attorney understand your situation.

Every divorce is different, and no guide can anticipate every detail of your case. As you work through these considerations, you'll likely think of additional questions specific to your family, finances, or goals.

A consultation is an opportunity to gain clarity, understand your options, and begin building a strategy that reflects your priorities. An experienced family law attorney can provide guidance tailored to your specific circumstances.

Section 1: Overall Strategy

What would be the recommended legal approach in my case?

Prenuptial or Postnuptial Agreements:

If a prenuptial or postnuptial agreement exists, what impact will it have on the divorce proceedings?

Preparing for a Divorce Before Filing:

What steps should I take to adequately prepare for a divorce before filing?

Are there specific documents, financial records, or other important information that I should gather to ensure a smooth process?

Additionally, what practical and emotional considerations should I keep in mind as I navigate the pre-filing phase of a divorce?

Section 2: Financials & Property

Spousal Support:

Is spousal support a possibility in my case?

If so, how is it determined and for how long?

Assets and Property:

How will the division of assets and property be handled?

What factors are considered in determining equitable distribution?

Business Interests:

How will the division of business interests, including ownership stakes and valuation, be addressed?

What are the typical considerations and procedures involved in addressing hedge funds or other investment assets in the context of a divorce?

How are these assets valued, divided, or otherwise accounted for during the equitable distribution process?

Tax Implications:

How will taxes be affected by the divorce?

Are there any potential tax advantages or disadvantages I should be aware of?

Retirement Accounts and Pensions:

How are retirement accounts and pensions divided?

Are there any tax implications or penalties to consider?

Real Estate Holdings:

How will real estate holdings, including primary residences, vacation homes, and investment properties, be handled?

International Assets or Jurisdiction:

If there are international assets or if you or your spouse reside in different countries, what implications does this have on the divorce process?

Inheritance and Property Acquired Before the Marriage:

What happens to inheritance or property acquired before the marriage? Can it be protected during the divorce?

Trust Interests:

Are my interests in a trust taken into consideration in the alimony, child support, and equitable distribution?

Section 3: Parenting Questions**Parenting Plan:**

What factors should be considered when creating a comprehensive parenting plan that promotes the best interests of our children?

How can we address important aspects such as custody arrangements, visitation schedules, decision-making authority, and communication between co-parents to ensure a stable and supportive environment for our children post-divorce?

Child Custody and Visitation:

What factors are considered in determining child custody arrangements?

How is visitation scheduled and enforced?

Child Support:

How is child support calculated?

What expenses are typically included, and for how long does it continue?

Section 4: Experts

Expert Partners:

Will we need to retain experts such as a real estate appraiser, business appraiser, CPA, or others?

Section 5: Timeline & Fees

Timeline and Process:

How long can the divorce process take?

What steps are involved, and what can I expect at each stage?

Legal Fees and Billing:

What are the attorney's fees, and how are they structured?

Are there any potential additional costs or expenses to consider?

Attorney Communications:

What can I expect in terms of access and communication with the attorneys and my team throughout the divorce proceedings?

How frequently will I have the opportunity to meet or speak with my attorney?

What channels of communication will be available to ensure that I stay informed and have the necessary guidance throughout the process?

Legal Support:

Who will be primarily handling my case and representing my interests throughout the divorce proceedings?

Could you provide information about their experience and expertise in divorce law?

Additionally, under what circumstances would it be advisable to engage other professionals, such as mediators, financial experts, or child custody evaluators, to support my case effectively?

Section 6: Miscellaneous Questions

Privacy and Confidentiality:

How is a client's privacy and confidentiality maintained during the divorce proceedings?

Substance Abuse:

What are the legal and practical implications of requesting or being subjected to drug testing during the divorce process, either for myself or my spouse?

How does it impact child custody, division of assets, and other relevant aspects?

Under what circumstances would it be advisable or necessary to request drug testing for my spouse or myself?

How can this testing be conducted accurately and fairly, while also respecting privacy rights?

Safety:

What measures can I take to ensure my safety during and after the divorce process?

Are there legal options available to obtain protection orders or restraining orders if I feel threatened or at risk?

How can I navigate potential safety concerns effectively?

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