



PENTANA  
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LAWYERS



# SEPARATION CHECKLIST

Your Guide \_\_\_\_\_

+ FAMILY LAW

We understand that separation can feel overwhelming, like an emotional rollercoaster that's never going to end.



To help you navigate the separation process, we've put together a quick checklist of things you should organise before moving forward.



## **COLLECT ALL IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS**



You don't want to be searching your house for important documents during a stressful separation. Collect birth certificates, marriage certificates and passports as soon as possible and place them in a safe location. Make two copies (electronic and physical) of each document.



Start organising your finances by collecting any important financial documents for yourself and, if possible, your partner. Make copies of your income tax returns and notices of assessment for the last three (3) financial years, employment contracts, recent payslips and records of leave entitlements, bank statements, superannuation account or entitlement, and any investment or insurance documents.



## ORGANISE YOUR HOME AND PERSONAL LIFE

- ✓ Change the passwords for your accounts. It doesn't matter how amicable your relationship is; things can change at any time. Make sure you do this for all personal accounts, including email and social media, and any of your electronic devices. If possible, you should close any joint accounts.
- ✓ Take the time to prepare an inventory of furniture and assets in your home. Take pictures of things that are difficult to describe or may cause problems in the future. You want to do this as soon as possible in case items are removed, sold or destroyed.
- ✓ Set up your new postal address as soon as you can. Even if you suspect your ex may not look through your mail, you should consider setting up a postal box. You may want to give the address of someone you trust for any important correspondence.



## START ORGANISING YOUR FINANCES

- ✓ Start by creating a separate bank account and re-direct your earnings or government pensions there. In most marriages, there are always some joint bills and accounts; be sure to clearly define who is responsible for what. Remember, you are both equally responsible and, if one party stops paying, the other can become liable.
- ✓ To help with any issues that arise, take note of all your assets and financial and non-financial contributions to the relationship. This will help determine your divorce settlement.
- ✓ Review your estate planning. Your Will and your superannuation may also need reviewing to ensure your estate goes to the people you want.
- ✓ Finally, work out a budget to suit your new situation. List your monthly income (including your salary), spousal or child maintenance (if applicable), and your projected monthly expenses.



## ORGANISE THE WELFARE OF YOUR CHILDREN

- ✓ Create a formal parenting plan. Taking care of your children during a separation can be very taxing. It's important for you and your spouse to engage constructively and create a formal agreement about parenting. Determine the parental responsibilities, where the children will live, who will they live with, how and when you will communicate and spend time with them, and how you will resolve any disagreements.
- ✓ Compile a list of all people and professionals who provide care for your children. This list will include doctors, physiotherapists, paediatricians, and dentists. Get up-to-date information about all treatments and obtain copies of all reports.
- ✓ You may want to update your children's teacher to help them better understand your child's progress. Stay involved in your children's school lives as best you can.



## SEEK LEGAL ADVICE

- ✓ You don't have to go through this alone. A simpler separation starts with knowing what comes next. Specialist family law advice from a trusted expert can allow you to concentrate on taking care of yourself and your children during this stressful period.



**JESSE LAGRECA**  
PARTNER | PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

# Want to talk about the next steps?

Whether you are going through a difficult separation and need to secure your assets, want more time with your children, we can help you.


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