



By Mariam Ibrahim, Esquire

The divorce is final. No more deadlines to meet, papers to file or waiting time for all of it to be over. Now that the hard part is behind you, it is time for a fresh start. However, there might be a few things remaining for you to do before you can officially move on to the next chapter.

The following is a checklist of things that you might still need to do after your divorce is finalized:

- Review your divorce decree and create a list of things that you and your former spouse still need to satisfy. It could help if you create a calendar to visualize when certain things are due such as alimony/child support payments or when certain things are scheduled to terminate.
- Divide investment assets and retirement plans according to the terms of the divorce settlement agreement. Dividing a 401(k) or pension will require a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO). A QDRO is a court order telling the administrators of the retirement plan or the 401(k) how to divide the account. Most QDROs need to be drafted by an attorney or a CPA, signed by you and the former spouse, filed with the court and signed by a judge. If you are the recipient of a portion of your former spouse's retirement account and you need the QDRO, it is imperative that you follow-up with your attorney to ensure the implementation of the QDRO is done in a timely fashion.
- Update all beneficiary designations with your workplace retirement plans, investment accounts, retirement accounts, trusts, annuities, life insurance, bank accounts, credit cards and any other place you might have listed your former spouse as a beneficiary.
- Obtain your own insurance coverage for your health, automobile, home and life insurance.
- Review your credit report to cancel any joint credit cards and close any joint accounts. Also, look through your credit report for any joint debts that you were not aware of.
- Update your estate planning documents including your will, any trusts, durable and health care power of attorneys. If you never had a will, this is a good time to consider making one.

- Change your emergency contacts with your workplace, doctors, health club, etc.
- If you changed your name back to your maiden name, you will need to notify different agencies. Most importantly, you will need to change your name on your social security card, passport and your driver's license. You should also consider changing your name on your social media accounts.
- Consider changing your passwords to any emails or online accounts (i.e. Paypal, Facebook, etc.) that you might have shared the access information with your former spouse. Confirm that your spouse isn't either a signer or authorized user on any of your online accounts.
- After the divorce, your financial circumstances have likely changed. You should consider developing, by yourself or with the help of a professional, a new financial plan for your new life.

Getting these things done might seem a burden now, after all you have been through, but it is necessary to avoid trouble later on. It is better that you go through this checklist and handle these issues as soon as your divorce is finalized to prevent possible future complications.

Once these things are done, you get to close that chapter and enjoy your new life with no worries about unhandled matters left over from the divorce.

Mariam W. Ibrahim, concentrates her practice exclusively in Family Law. She can be reached at mibrahim@ammlaw.com (215) 230-7500, x161.