

# The Law Offices of Julie Byrd Ashworth

## *The Dos and Don'ts of Divorce*

*These are suggestions. If you have questions about this advice please call us.*

*No judgment, no worries.*



## The Dos

### *Passwords/Backups*

- Reset all your passwords and security questions.
- Buy an inexpensive tablet, laptop, etc., if needed due to worry of keystroke software.
- Create new passwords and security questions.
- Create a brand-new email account for all things related to your case.
- Backup all your personal items (pictures, documents, files, etc.) onto a new/separate drive in case you must give up your phone or joint account.

### *Property*

- Get copies of titles, deeds, insurance policies, etc.
- Make a list of **YOUR** separate property with pictures, date purchased, value when purchased and current value.
- Make a list of **JOINT** property with pictures, date purchased, value when purchased and current value.
- Take pictures of each room including the attic, garage, shed, etc. and each wall from the middle with furniture, wall decor, open cabinets & drawers. *When gathering pictures in the house turn off any surveillance cameras or wi-fi.*
- Get Blue Book value for all cars as of date of separation.
- Get value of all assets as of date of separation.

### *Banking/Bills/Income*

- Get a new bank account.
- Change your direct deposits and debts to your new bank account.
- Retrieve statements for all accounts from the month you were married until date of separation (bank, retirement, investment, credit cards, loans, mortgages, etc. accounts).
- Close joint credit accounts.
- Get one year's worth of phone records.
- Place passwords on utilities, phone accounts, etc., so they cannot be turned off without your consent.
- Get copies of past 3 years tax returns or if unavailable get tax transcript.
- Get your own cell phone plan.

### *Important Documents*

- Get original copies of birth certificates, vaccine records, social security card, passports, etc. for yourself and children. Give copies to other party.
- Get pictures of prescription medications that you, your spouse and children take, including doctor, pharmacy and date of fill/refill.
- Update Wills and beneficiaries before filing for divorce. *(You don't want your soon-to-be-ex making decisions about pulling the plug.)*

### *Credit*

- Pull a copy of your free credit report from **only one** reporting agency and then check another every 4 months. *Credit Karma is not the same.*
- Remove spouse as an authorized card holder/user prior to filing your divorce.

### Communication

- Get a PO Box for your mail.
- Text, email, and communicate like everything is going to be read by the court, because it likely will be.
- If possible, communicate with your spouse only via text message, instant message, or email, so you have a record of your communication.
- Confirm verbal communication with text or email sent.

### Children

- Contact schools and doctors to let them know

the situation and that no changes in contact should be made.

- Keep a parenting calendar or diary. We recommend a block calendar with one month on each page. Keep notes of who has the child (ren) each day.

### Additionally

- Document **EVERYTHING!**
- Keep notes (electronic or on paper) of important events, conversations, dates, and times so you can reference if needed.
- Preserve texts and emails so they do not auto-delete. (Suggested apps: iMazing - iPhone, Legal Text Collector - Android)

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## The Don'ts

- Do not text your kids anything about the case or their other parent, seriously we do not care if they are 16 or 17, 25 or 40. **Don't do it!**
- Do not tell friends the nitty-gritty details, friends today may not be friends tomorrow. You don't know if they are secretly spying.
- Do not speak ill of your spouse in writing (text, email, social media, etc.) or to mutual friends or family.
- Do not make your spouse's avatar picture and name in your phone derogatory (no poop emojis or names other than their own).
- Do not sign anything without us seeing it first.
- Do not track your spouse or their vehicle, including through your children.
- Do not start dating or move-in with a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Do not sign-up for dating apps or X-rated websites.
- Do not spend extravagant amounts of money on yourself or anyone else.
- Do not take out loans or transfer money. Do not make major financial changes or choices (i.e. withdrawing retirement funds, buy/sell home, or car, taking out loans, etc.).
- Do not sell or get rid of any joint property or items belonging to spouse.
- Do not destroy property.
- Do not be vindictive when leaving/vacating or a joint residence (put fish inside curtain rods when moving out, etc.).

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## Reminders

**All records that you keep are discoverable information. Please make sure what you record you are fine with other people seeing in the discovery process.**

**It is better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it.**

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