

Checklist for working well with a lawyer

Your lawyer's name and address: _____

Your lawyer's phone number: _____

To prepare for your meeting (write these down and give them to your lawyer at the first meeting)

- your telephone number(s) and other contact information, so the lawyer can reach you if he or she may be late or miss a meeting
- a summary (typed, if possible) of your story, including important dates
- full names and birth dates of all your children
- medical problems you or your children have
- the full name and current address, if you know it, of the other party
- the date you started living together and/or got married, and when you separated
- information about your income
- everything you know about the other party's income
- information about where you work
- information about where the other party works
- a list of everything that you and the other party own, together or separately, including property, pension plans, RRSPs, or bank accounts (even if they are in the other party's name only)
- a list of debts that either or both of you have
- a list of incidents in your relationship that explain any need for a protection or custody order (for example, incidents of physical or mental abuse)

Bring along to show your lawyer

- all documents that relate to your case, such as:
 - your separation agreement
 - any court order that exists
 - any new application
- identification with your full name and address (tell the lawyer if you do not want this information given to anyone else)
- your children's CareCard numbers
- your Social Insurance Number card
- the other party's social insurance number
- your marriage certificate
- if support or property are issues, your tax returns or summaries for the past three years
- copies of the other party's tax returns for the past three years
- property tax assessments
- your three most recent pay stubs

- copies of the other party's pay stubs, if available
- your citizenship or immigration documents

What else to bring

- a list of questions, some paper, and a pen so that you can write down the answers to the questions that you have

What to write down at the meetings

- The decisions made
- The tasks you each agreed to do
- When each of you promised to complete your tasks
- The amount of time you spent with your lawyer

What to remember

- Keep copies of all documents you give your lawyer.
- Write out questions before every interview so that you will not forget anything.
- Bring a friend or advocate with you if you can. They can remind you of questions you had, and take notes of what the lawyer says and what you agree to do at the meeting.
- Talk only about your case and the facts important to that case.
- Limit the number of phone calls you make to your lawyer and keep calls to a reasonable length. Keep track of your calls to your lawyer and what you talk about.
- Write out clearly or make copies of any new information you have for your lawyer and give it to his or her secretary.

- if the police have been involved with your family, the business cards of the police officers you dealt with

- some ideas about what you want to have happen

- If you have a legal aid lawyer, ask how much time is available for working on your case and how you can help prepare your case

- Write out contact information for witnesses you would like to suggest. Describe briefly what each witness can testify about.
- Write all appointments and court appearances on your calendar.
- Be on time for every appointment with your lawyer or court appearance. If an emergency arises, let the lawyer's office or court clerk know immediately that you will be late.
- Ask questions when you do not understand your lawyer.
- Answer all your lawyer's questions as soon as possible and tell your lawyer clearly what you decide at each stage of your case.
- Do everything you told your lawyer you would do.