

# MARITAL DIFFICULTIES?

## Common Sense Tips To Follow As You Separate!

If you are unhappy in your marriage and have been considering separating from or divorcing your spouse, here is some important advice to take into consideration when deciding on what your next steps should be.

1. You should never just move out without first consulting a lawyer. Likewise, you should never try to force your spouse to leave without consulting a lawyer. We will help you to understand the consequences of these scenarios, and help you to decide the best approach for your situation.
2. One of your first steps prior to taking any action is to gather information. Collect copies of all financial documentation such as bank statements, retirement account statements, tax returns, pay stubs, password information, credit card and mortgage statements, employment agreements, life insurance documentation, and everything else that helps provide a complete picture of your financial circumstances. We will assist you in this regard.
3. Secure and safeguard your sentimental and/or irreplaceable marital items that could "disappear" once a separation takes place, such as jewelry, guns, coins, photographs, artwork and antiques. We will discuss with you appropriate steps to be taken.
4. Take photos of your household belongings and, if possible, make a written inventory of each room of the house if you are contemplating a separation or divorce.
5. Understand your household budget and your personal expenses. Whether you are staying in the marital home, or leaving, understanding what it takes to pay the monthly expenses is an important part of this process. An analysis of your budgetary needs and your net monthly income and the impact of potential support should be done. Talking with us as to understand whether you are eligible for support or whether you will be obligated to pay support will help with the overall analysis and strategy.
6. Identify whether there are joint accounts at risk and talk to us about how to protect them.
7. Talk to us about additional steps to take to ensure your financial stability in the early stages of this process. The court system often moves slowly, and you may need to take certain steps in the beginning to avoid a dramatic change of circumstances.
8. Establish a network of family and/or friends at the outset to provide you with emotional support and help with the children.
9. Understand that sometimes, things can happen that are beyond your control. We will help you to handle whatever you may have to face.
10. Do not discuss your plans to divorce or separate with your children. We can help you to understand what is, and what is not appropriate in this situation and guide you to the right professionals to assist as well.

Our team of top divorce and family law attorneys are available to answer your hardest questions. We represent men and women like you every day to navigate this very difficult time in your life. **Contact us at [www.smglaw.com](http://www.smglaw.com) or 412.281.5423.**

## Getting Married? Separating? Divorcing? Support and Custody Issues?



**You need to talk to the lawyers at Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky. Get advice now.**

**Our Team (L-R):**  
Max Levine  
Chrystal Tinstman  
Reid Roberts, *Chair*  
Shannon Sacca



**Strassburger McKenna  
Gutnick & Gefsky**

ATTORNEYS AT LAW | SINCE 1919

**Your Goals | Our Priority**

Offices in Beaver, Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties

**412.281.5423 | [www.smglaw.com](http://www.smglaw.com)**