



# DIVORCE — & — MONEY

**How to help protect your  
financial future when you  
go separate ways.**





You and your spouse planned for the future together. But what you probably didn't plan for is a divorce. When that happens, you're left wondering how you'll protect yourself financially as you build a new plan for your life.

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Unfortunately, the rate of “gray divorce” — divorce after age 50 — has doubled in the U.S. since 1990.<sup>1</sup> Untangling finances can be complicated, especially if you've been married for a long time or own substantial assets. Many people who divorce worry about the impact on their health care resources, current lifestyle and potential retirement.

While your retirement plans may shift due to divorce, it is possible to get through it without the need to start from scratch with your retirement savings. In the following pages, we take a look at what you need to consider as you begin to divide your financial assets — and how you can come through a divorce with a new sense of hope for your financial future.

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**2x**

The increase in divorces  
among people age  
50+ since 1990<sup>2</sup>



1 in 3 - The number of  
marriages that end in divorce in  
the U.S.<sup>3</sup>

**45%**

Decline in women's standard of  
living after a divorce<sup>4</sup>

**21%**

Decline in men's standard of  
living after a divorce<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1,2</sup> Catherine Fredman. Investopedia. Aug. 30, 2021. "12 Mistakes to Avoid When Divorcing Over 50." <https://www.investopedia.com/personal-finance/mistakes-avoid-when-divorcing-over-50/#citation-13>. Accessed May 12, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> The United States Census Bureau. April 22, 2021. "Number, Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorces." <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/marriages-and-divorces.html>. Accessed May 12, 2022.

<sup>4,5</sup> National Library of Medicine. I-Fen Lin and Susan Brown. Sept. 9, 2020. "The Economic Consequences of Gray Divorce for Women and Men." <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8599059/>. Accessed May 12, 2022.

## Retirement Accounts

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Retirement accounts are perhaps the stickiest — and trickiest — assets to divide in a divorce. How do you decide a fair and equitable division of retirement savings? That predicament can be especially troublesome if one spouse has worked and made the bulk of contributions while the other has stayed home to care for family.

Your combined retirement assets could include multiple 401(k)s, 403(b)s, employer-sponsored qualified plans and IRAs. Your divorce agreement may include a qualified domestic relations order (QDRO), a special document signed by a judge stating how certain kinds of retirement accounts are to be divided. Special considerations apply when divorcing spouses are negotiating the terms of a QDRO, so the input of a qualified financial professional should be sought.

Beneficiaries also are a consideration for retirement accounts. In most cases, the soon-to-be-ex-spouse has been named as the beneficiary for employer-sponsored plans and IRAs. Following a divorce, you'll need to consider changing your beneficiaries to your adult children, a trust or a new spouse.

**Caution!** A divorce decree does not automatically change the named beneficiaries on a retirement account or

life insurance policy. You should consult with a financial professional for advice about proper beneficiary designations.

## Pensions

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State law provides some guidance about how a pension ought to be divided in a divorce. The plan itself may also have rules about whether any payouts are set up as a one-time, lump-sum payout or

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as monthly payments. The starting date for payments will also be determined by the pension-owning spouse's age, target retirement date and other criteria set by their employer. A QDRO is required to specify the details of splitting up a pension account.

## Annuities

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Like IRAs and 401(k)s, annuities are usually purchased with the intention of providing income in retirement. They come with contractual obligations for



you and the issuing company, which should be considered before being split between you and your partner. Questions you should ask before deciding who gets an annuity in a divorce settlement include:

- Can the annuity be split at all — or does it follow the annuitant (the person on whose life the annuity is based)?
- Will penalties for early surrender apply if the annuity is divided?
- Are there annuity rider benefits, and will they be affected by a split?

Annuities also include beneficiaries, which you may need to update after a divorce. Your financial professional can help you review your beneficiaries and find answers to your questions about the annuity contract. They also can help you determine what adjustments might need to be made to your retirement income plan if the annuity is no longer available as a resource.

## **Life Insurance**

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While term life insurance doesn't carry a cash value, a permanent policy might have a cash value. Like annuities, you'll want to check on any contractual obligations that may arise due to splitting that cash value, especially surrender charges. Likewise, you should consider the tax consequences of a split.

Most frequently, spouses name each other as the beneficiaries of life



insurance policies. In some cases, your divorce decree may state that you must leave your spouse as your beneficiary, especially if child support or spousal support is in place. If this doesn't apply, you should consider updating your beneficiary. You also should review and reevaluate your existing life insurance, making sure it still fits your needs.

### **Investments**

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Your nonretirement investments might include brokerage and advisory accounts that hold mutual funds or other individual stocks and bonds. While these assets are more liquid and easily divided than retirement accounts, you could end up paying additional taxes on gains realized from any required sale of an investment. Your portfolio also could end up becoming unbalanced as a result of a divorce — leaving you open to too much risk.

### **Social Security**

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Navigating the ins and outs of Social Security is tough — and understanding your options after divorce make it even tougher. If you're approaching or have reached eligibility age for Social Security and you were married for more than 10 years, you may be able to take benefits based on your ex-spouse's record.<sup>6</sup>

Your financial professional can help you determine whether you can take benefits based on your ex-spouse's record — and whether you should. Social Security benefits are just one piece of your overall retirement income puzzle, and your financial professional will consider all of the pieces to help you create a plan that is designed to meet your individual needs.

### **It's Time for a New Plan**

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Like most major life events, divorce can leave not only emotional scars but also financial scars. Our job is to help you heal those financial scars and get you back on your feet. We aim to help you become financially confident, no matter what the future brings.

If you're navigating a divorce, we can help. Simply give us a call to schedule your no-obligation meeting. Let's work together to help you protect your financial future and plan for your new life beyond divorce.

<sup>6</sup> Social Security Administration. "Retirement Benefits." <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html>. Accessed May 12, 2022.





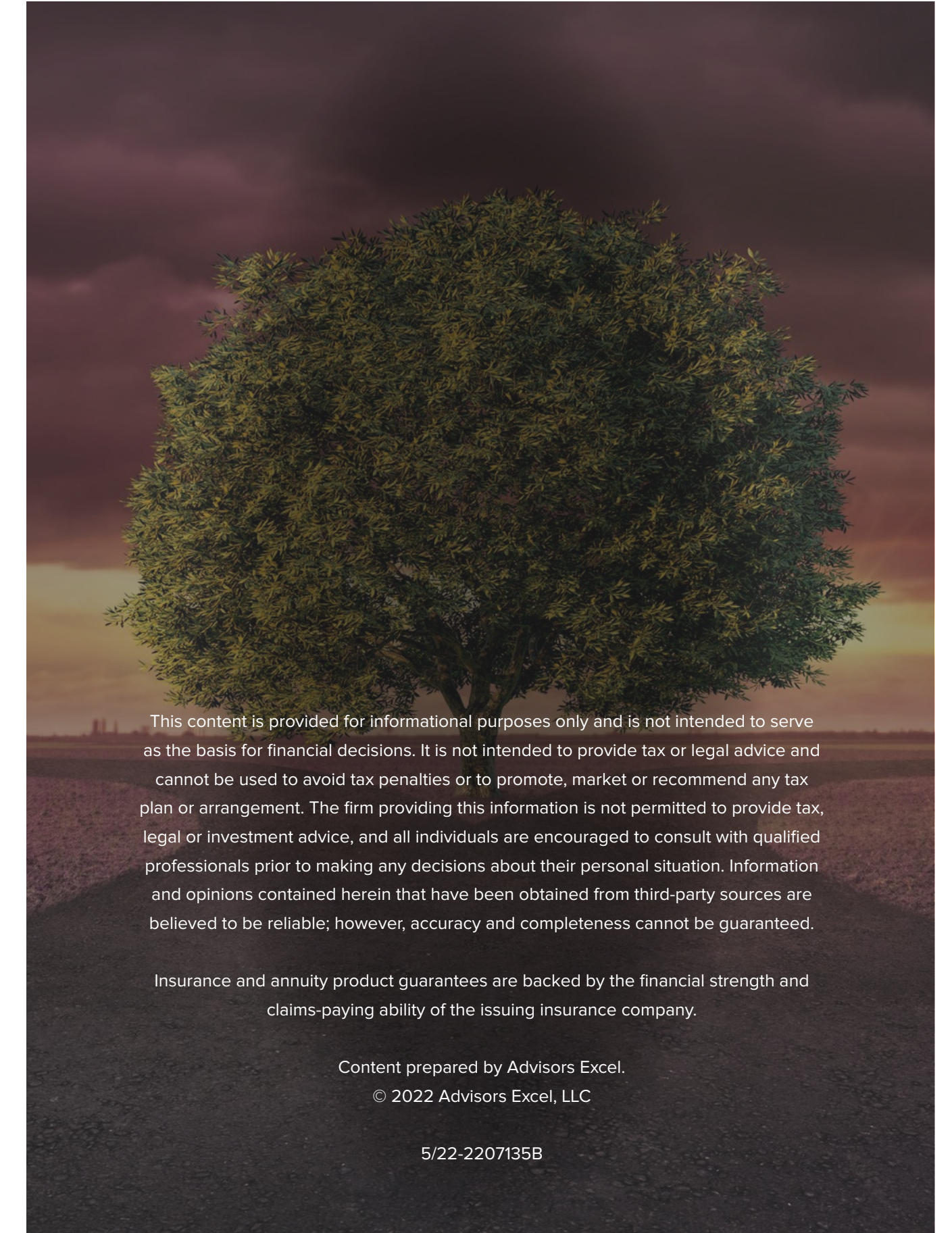
## Divorce Documents Checklist

Ensure all assets are addressed in your divorce proceedings by gathering the following documents and information for yourself, your ex-spouse (if possible), and all joint accounts:

- Payroll stubs for the past two months
- Statements for all personal and professional bank accounts (checking, savings, CDs, etc.)
- Credit card statements
- Statements of outstanding loan balances (student, vehicles, furnishings, etc.)
- Pension and retirement account statements (401(k), 403(b), IRA, TSP)
- Investment statements (brokerage accounts, mutual funds, individual securities, etc.)
- Annuity statements, including beneficiaries
- Social Security statements
- Life insurance policies, including beneficiaries and cash value (if any)
- Other insurance policies (health, disability, etc.)
- College savings account statements
- Partnership or business financial statements (if applicable)
- Real estate documents for all properties owned (include titles, appraisals and current mortgage statements)
- Titles and insurance policies for all motor vehicles
- Tax documents
- Tax returns for the past three years
- W2s and 1099s for the past three years
- Partnership or business tax returns (if applicable)
- Legal documents
- Wills
- Trusts
- Health care directives
- Power of attorney
- List of personal property (furniture, jewelry, collections, antiques, etc.)
- Memberships (gym, country club, social club, etc.)
- Mileage and travel rewards
- Inventory of items in a safe deposit box or home safe

Before agreeing to terms of a divorce, we advise you to seek counsel from qualified professionals. A financial professional can work with your legal, tax and investment professionals to ensure you've addressed all questions pertaining to your financial assets.





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