

Checklist for meeting with a family law lawyer

Gather your information

Your lawyer will need certain information about you, the other person, and your situation so they can give you legal advice and talk about different options with you. Take as much of the information listed below as you can with you to your meeting with the lawyer.

Information about you, the other person, and any children

- A piece of government-issued photo ID, like a driver's licence
- Your phone numbers and other contact information
- The other person's full name and address, if you know it
- Your citizenship or immigration documents, if you weren't born in Canada
- The other person's full name and address, if you know it
- Full names and birth dates of all your children
- A list of any health conditions you or your children have and medication any of you need
- Details about where you and the other person work

Information about your case

- A short summary of your issue. If possible, type it so it's easy to read. Include all the important facts, such as:
 - why you're separating
 - important dates (for example, when you started living together or got married, and when you separated)
 - how many children you have and their ages
 - if you're working and how much you earn
 - if the other person is working and how much they earn
 - where you're living and if you can keep living there without financial support
 - your current arrangements for the children and money
- All the documents you have that relate to your case, including:
 - any agreements you made with the other person before or after you separated
 - any court [orders](#)
 - any new court applications you've made or are preparing

Information about your and the other person's finances

- Your tax returns or summaries for the past three years, if you're going to talk about support or property
- Copies of the other person's tax returns for the past three years, if you have them
- Your three most recent pay stubs (or proof of EI or disability payments)
- Copies of the other person's pay stubs (or proof of EI or disability payments), if possible
- A list of everything that you and the other person own together or separately, including
 - pension plans, RRSPs, TFSAs, or bank accounts (even if they have only the other person's name on them)
 - property (such as the family home, investment property, and personal property)
- The most recent property tax assessments for your home and any other property either of you own
- A list of debts that either or both of you have

Information about any family violence

- Details about any physical or psychological abuse in your relationship (if you want a protection order)
- The business cards of the police officers you've dealt with (if the police have been involved with your family).
- A list that explains why you need, or have needed, an order for protection or for custody, guardianship, or parenting arrangements, for example.

Other things to take to the meeting

- Your written notes about what you want for yourself, your children, and your finances
- The questions you want to ask
- Plenty of paper and a pen so you can take notes and write down the answers to your questions
- Another person, to help you take notes or to be there for support