

## Sudden Marriage Breakdown

An unexpected, out-of-the-blue walkout or lockout in a marriage is shocking and emotionally devastating. It also creates immediate financial and legal issues that must be handled immediately to avoid future financial and legal issues.

Sudden marriage breakdown checklist:

- 1) Make a new folder where you'll store all of your documentation.
- 2) Change online passwords (online)
- 3) Freeze the credit cards (online)
- 4) Find some support for you (family, friends, and online) and start a journal. If they're in town and divorced, ask for lawyer recommendations, have them help you through the to-do list, and give them any weapons in your house to store temporarily.
- 5) Set up a new checking account in just your name (online or in the bank)
- 6) Ask the bank about freezing any shared savings accounts attached to the old, shared checking, or other options available (online or in the bank)
- 7) Google some lawyers and send them emails requesting appointments. (online)
- 8) Take a check from your new account to Payroll at work to set up a new Direct Deposit (in-office)
- 9) Inform your boss you're going through some stuff (in-office)
- 10) Talk to the kids about the situation and how you'll need help in the form of a chore chart, etc. Pretend to be as calm and steady as possible for this. (at home)
- 11) Notify the school about what's happening, and request the kids get some support, such as meeting with the councilor (online)
- 12) Meet with lawyers. Bring the contents of the folder you made in step 1.
- 13) Have a friend pack up your ex's stuff and deliver it to her.
- 14) If you can afford it, have a friend find you a cleaning/ housekeeping service.

Do not: Drink, get in fights, contact your spouse in any way, freak out in front of the kids, buy firearms, do anything which may jeopardize future custody, or breakdown/freakout in public or online (in private is ok).

Source: Washington Post, advice column in 2022, as a 'comment' from a family practice lawyer.