

DIVORCE AND SEPARATION | WORKSHEET 2 OF 3

Separation Decision Map

Sorts urgent decisions, negotiable issues and evidence gaps before process choices are made.

BEST USED
WHEN

Use this when everything feels connected and you need to decide what to address first.

ALBERTA LEGAL CHECKPOINT

You do not need a court order to separate. If you rely on one year of separation as the ground for divorce, you may start the case before the year is complete, but the divorce cannot be granted until you have lived separate and apart for at least one year. Parenting, support, property, safety and deadline issues may need attention much sooner.

Primary source: [Justice Canada: How to apply for a divorce](#)

PREPARED FOR

DATE

1 Complete what you know

2 Mark gaps and assumptions

3 Attach supporting records

THE PRACTICE LENS

A family file rarely has one problem or one clock. We separate issues by consequence, deadline and missing evidence, then ask which process fits each issue. Negotiation, mediation and court are tools, not all-or-nothing identities for the entire case.

A CONCRETE EXAMPLE

A parenting exchange may need a workable answer before Friday, a joint tax debt may require records to be preserved now, and the home value may safely wait for an appraisal. Mapping those tracks prevents the loudest issue from dictating every other decision.

Classify each issue

Use one row per issue and identify the source for every important number or date.

Issue	Decision needed	By when	What is missing
Safety or protection			
Parenting schedule			
Decision-making for children			
Child support and expenses			
Spousal support			
Home and household costs			
Property and debt			
Business, pension or tax			

Reality-test the process

Use short factual notes. If an answer is uncertain, write what would confirm it.

1. Can both people exchange reliable information without an order?

2. Is there a safety, coercion or power-imbalance concern that changes how negotiation should occur?

3. Is an interim decision needed before a full settlement is possible?

4. Would a neutral professional help resolve facts, value property or improve communication?

5. What would make a proposed process fail, and what safeguard could address it?

Consultation priorities

Tick completed items. Circle anything that needs a document, follow-up or legal advice.

- ☐ Circle the three decisions with the earliest real consequence.

- ☐ Mark every date that could be a limitation, court or contractual deadline.

- ☐ Bring the order, agreement or correspondence currently governing the issue.

- ☐ List the outcome you prefer and the minimum workable interim result.

- ☐ Identify one question you need answered before taking action.

BRING THIS TO YOUR CONSULTATION

You do not need every blank filled. Mark the three items that matter most, attach the records you relied on and use this handoff to identify the next decision.

STATUS	☐ Ready to discuss ☐ Missing records ☐ Deadline or urgent issue
NEXT REAL DEADLINE	
RECORD OR ANSWER STILL NEEDED	
DECISION I NEED HELP WITH	

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