

Your document checklist

Divorce and custody in Pennsylvania | Gather what is available. Note what is missing.

Start here, even if your records are incomplete.

Save complete records, originals and a secure backup. Do not delay calling about court papers, a deadline or a safety concern while gathering documents.

☐ **Court papers and key dates**

Complaints, notices, service documents and envelopes; current custody, support and protection orders; marital agreements. Record marriage, separation and upcoming court dates.

☐ **Income, taxes and household expenses**

Available tax returns, pay statements, benefits, business-income information, insurance costs, childcare expenses and a realistic monthly household budget.

☐ **Assets, debt and ownership**

Bank, investment and retirement statements; deeds, mortgages, vehicle titles, loans and credit cards. Identify possible premarital property, gifts and inheritances for counsel to review.

☐ **The child's routine and needs**

Actual parenting calendars, school and childcare information, health records you may lawfully access, transportation arrangements, shared expenses and existing parenting plans.

☐ **Relevant communications and events**

Full message threads, emails and relevant photos or files with dates and context. Keep a factual chronology and note where each original record is stored.

Keep collection lawful and safe

Do not enter another person's accounts without permission, install tracking tools, edit or delete relevant records, or involve a child in collecting evidence. Ask counsel before recording conversations. Do not post private information online.

Your private parenting log

Use factual observations. Keep this worksheet secure; do not submit it through the form.

Record what happened, when and how it affected the child.

Separate direct observations from reports by others. Include routine, positive cooperation as well as concerns. Avoid labels, speculation and commentary about the other parent.

Entry 1 | Date / time: _____ **Child / initials:** _____

Scheduled parenting time / exchange and what actually happened:

Child-related facts / impact / any follow-up needed:

Communication or record saved (file name / location):

Entry 2 | Date / time: _____ **Child / initials:** _____

Scheduled parenting time / exchange and what actually happened:

Child-related facts / impact / any follow-up needed:

Communication or record saved (file name / location):

Entry 3 | Date / time: _____ **Child / initials:** _____

Scheduled parenting time / exchange and what actually happened:

Child-related facts / impact / any follow-up needed:

Communication or record saved (file name / location):

Safety first: call 911 for immediate danger. Ask promptly about protection orders or urgent court options. This log is not an emergency report, proof of a legal conclusion or a substitute for advice.

Plan your first conversation

Bring this kit and the records you have. Ask how to share sensitive documents securely.

☐ **What needs attention now?**

Which response dates, hearings, safety issues or temporary arrangements require prompt action?
What should I do if I receive new papers?

☐ **Which issues need separate action?**

How do divorce, custody, support, property and debt questions apply to my situation? Which county is appropriate?

☐ **What rights should I preserve before signing?**

What financial claims must be raised before a divorce decree? What could be affected by a settlement, property transfer or waiver?

☐ **What parenting arrangements are workable?**

How should school days, holidays, transport, decisions and communication be addressed? What does the current order require? Ask before relocation or changing an order.

☐ **What are the scope, fees and next steps?**

What work would representation include? What costs, records and follow-up are expected? How will the firm confirm acceptance and communicate with me?

My top questions / documents still needed:

Official resources: pacourts.us/learn/representing-yourself (divorce and custody);
pacourts.us/learn/protection-orders. Pennsylvania custody law: Title 23, Chapter 53 at legis.state.pa.us.

Prepared October 16, 2026. Procedures vary by county and can change. Keep completed pages private. A resource request does not pause deadlines, establish representation or guarantee an outcome.