

The Move Out Checklist

from Husband Help Haven

This checklist is a bonus download for the two-part series on Husband Help Haven about moving out during a separation.

Part 1 – [5 Big Risks When You Move Out of the Marital Home](#)

Part 2 – [Should You Move Out to Give Your Wife Space?](#)

If you haven't read both of these blog posts, please do so now.

If you're using this checklist, the assumption is that you've made a confident, rational decision to move out. You know the potential benefits and consequences, and ideally you've talked to a lawyer in preparation. Now you just need help covering your bases.

Grounds for Divorce

Determine whether you live in a no-fault state.

- If you do, you may be able to skip this step.
- If your state considers grounds for divorce, **document proof that you and your wife both agree you should move out.** This could be as simple as saving an email or text message in which our wife asks you to move out.

Has your wife committed marital misconduct? If so, you will need to prove it. Gather proof and talk to your lawyer before you move out. According to Cornell Law School, marital misconduct includes:

- Ongoing alcoholism or drug addiction
- Infidelity, can be emotional, but physical is easier to prove
- Physical abuse
- Inhuman or cruel treatment, emotional abuse
- Economic fault, which in layman's terms means doing something shady or illegal with shared finances or assets

Can your wife claim that you've committed marital misconduct? If so, talk to your lawyer immediately.

Child Custody

Make a decision – Are the kids coming with you or staying in the marital home?

Write a plan for when, where and how you will continue to see your kids.

- [] **Create a temporary parenting agreement** that is reasonably close to what you want after the divorce. If you want 50/50 custody and visitation, you should continue taking care of the kids 50% of the time. The more stuff you can put in writing, the better.
- [] **Ensure your new residence is suitable for childcare.**
 - Safe, both inside and outside the home. Safe neighborhood, quiet street, safe apartment, etc.
 - Enough space for all of your kids to be comfortable. Ideally no more than two kids to a bedroom.
 - Located close to the marital home. The less extra time your kids have to spend commuting, the better.
 - Located in the same school district as the marital home.
- [] **Remain cooperative with your wife and have a good attitude about parenting.** Your goal is to show that you can co-parent with her even after the divorce.

Division of Property

- [] **Take a video or photo of every room in the home.**
- [] **Take a video or photo of all four sides of the home's exterior, as well as the yard.**
- [] **Make a written inventory of all noteworthy shared property.** Everything from the house down to the kitchen appliances and furniture. You don't have to include your wife's toothbrush, but anything you can think of that you'd want considered in splitting assets should be written down now.
- [] **Make copies of ALL important documents, ideally for both you and your wife.** This includes:
 - Tax returns
 - Marriage license
 - Birth certificates
 - Education records
 - Social security cards
 - Medical records
 - Bank statements
 - Bank account information
 - Credit card statements
 - Most recent credit report (consider getting an updated copy for both you and your wife)

- Both spouse's pay stubs or other proof of income
- Proof of insurance
- Titles and deeds for all major property (i.e. house, car).
- Life insurance policies
- Partnership agreements
- Business registration, if applicable

Plus anything else you can think of... Better to have too much documentation than too little.

- [] **List all important personal belongings that you do not want "accidentally lost" or destroyed.** For example, a family heirloom, personal memento, favorite photos. If possible, take these with you when you leave. You can rent a storage unit if you don't have room for them in your new residence.

Finances

- [] **If you are the primary income provider**, you may choose to provide your spouse with your proof of income at this time.
- [] **If you are not the primary income provider**, be sure to get some kind of proof of income from your wife. Exactly what this looks like may vary, you just want proof of all the money your wife makes.
- [] **Make a list of everything you will need to take, buy or pay for to move into your new place.** This includes clothes, toiletries, bedding, food, packing materials and moving expenses, furniture, medication, kitchen utensils and materials, tools, computer, cleaning materials, etc.
- [] **Create a written, agreed-upon budget for your separation.** It should describe who pays for what, how much you each get to spend, how much you each will need. Remember to set aside money for legal fees, either separately or together. You can revise your budget later, but also remember that just like with child custody, temporary agreements tend to become permanent after divorce.
- [] **Save copies of all important receipts, invoices, account statements, etc.**
- [] **Make a decision – Are you going to open private checking, savings and credit card accounts?** If so, do that now.
- [] **Open up your own accounts with your local utilities.** If you need to set up a new Internet or phone plan, do that now too.

Miscellaneous

- [] **Open a P.O. Box (optional)**, especially if you will be living with a friend, family member or roommate. Even if you'll be living in your own house or apartment, a P.O. Box gives you guaranteed privacy and security with any mail you might receive from your attorney or similarly sensitive information.
- [] **Forward your mail to your new address or P.O. Box.**
- [] **Write a script of what to tell your wife** when you tell her you're moving out, or that you accept her request for you to move out. If you're going to be telling your wife to move out instead, you will definitely want to plan ahead for that too.
- [] **Take 5-10 minutes to mentally face your fears.** Ask yourself, "What is the worst thing that could happen after I move out?" Close your eyes and run through this scenario in your head. Prepare yourself for it.

If this worst case scenario is not a risk you're willing to take, ensure that you have either fully protected yourself against it or reconsider moving out for the time being.

Finally, the single most important thing to do is...

CONSULT A DIVORCE ATTORNEY!

For more practical separation advice, check out
[Manly Separation Survival](#)