

USEFUL DOCUMENTS IN A FAMILY LAW MATTER

Pursuant to Court Rules, parties may obtain “discovery” regarding any matter, not privileged, which is relevant to the subject matter involved in the pending action. In our experience handling domestic matters, the following are the most useful document categories to have copies of at the start of any family law action (and that we may need to produce to the other party):

1. Marriage Certificate, birth certificates, and social security numbers (or copies of cards) of all family members.
2. U.S. Passports for you and spouse (and of the children).
3. Appointment diaries for you, your spouse or family business for last five years or more to cover all significant events in the marriage.
4. Personal diaries of you or spouse.
5. Resumes for both spouses.
6. Tax returns for the last three (3) years (federal, state and local with all attachments). If your spouse is in the area of sales or receives commissions, we recommend five (5) years of returns.
7. W2s and Form 1099s for every year to have a tax return.
8. Spouse’s pay stubs for at least past 12 weeks.
9. Your pay stubs for at least past 12 weeks.
10. Documentation for all other sources of income, including, but not limited to, social security, disability and unemployment benefits.
11. If the family maintains cash at home, photograph/copy of the currency laid out so that the denomination and serial numbers of the currency can be seen.
12. List of Safety Deposit Box contents, including box number and bank branch location. Also, the inventory of any safe(s) maintained at the residence.
13. Checking account(s) statements, including the cancelled checks, deposit slips and copies of check registers for the last five (5) years including closed

accounts. If you will be claiming your spouse wasted marital assets, we would recommend these documents inclusive of the time period for the marital waste.

14. Savings account(s) statements for past five (5) years, including closed accounts.
15. Children's savings accounts established during the marriage including any trusts established by you or relatives.
16. Trust documents or similar services established for/by you or your spouse.
17. U.S. Savings Bonds for you and/or spouse and for children.
18. Certificates of Deposit for the last three (3) years including closed certificates.
19. Pension documents including valuations for you and your spouse for all employers during the course of the marriage.
20. Employer-sponsored savings programs (401Ks, 403Bs, Keogh, SEP-IRAs, Profit-Sharing, Defined Benefit etc...) including valuations for you and your spouse.
21. Individual Retirement Account (IRA) statements.
22. Dividend and interest statements, including any tax-free accounts.
23. Stocks and brokerage account statements which include buy/sell orders, margin calls, etc.
24. Documentation of outstanding insurance claims for either spouse and/or family business regarding liability and/or negligence which are seeking damages recovery.
25. Proof of inheritance(s) received by either of you including copies of any trust documents and/or will(s).
26. Powers of attorney you or your spouse hold for a third person.
27. All judgments you, your spouse, or family business hold against someone else.
28. Life insurance policies, for either of you.
29. Auto insurance policies (most current).
30. Medical insurance plan including information on hospitalization, dental, eyeglass, prescription coverage.
31. Homeowner's insurance coverage (full policy and declaration sheets, preferable).

32. Burial insurance coverage, prepaid funeral arrangements, cemetery plots, etc.
33. Self-employment (family business) documents (for either spouse's business) which indicate income and losses, assets and liabilities, including copies of any business income tax return.
34. Partnership Agreements or other agreements for any business with persons/companies outside the marriage.
35. Business banking records, including cancelled statements, checks, deposit slips and copy of account register.
36. Financial statements individually or of the family or other business including balance sheets, profit and loss statements, income statements, operating expense reports, customer lists, and accounts receivable and payable for at least the last five (5) years.
37. Family or other business valuations.
38. Buy/Sell Agreements.
39. Business By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation or formation, including any "doing business as" information.
40. Business leases or loan documents.
41. Bills for your monthly expenses, such as utility, cable, propane, water/sewer, grocery, child care, loans, etc., for at least the last 12 months.
42. Credit card statements, slips, credits for at least the last three (3) years. If marital waste is claimed, obtain records to cover the time period for the marital waste.
43. Loans, loan applications (auto, home improvement, personal, etc.) and Promissory Notes for any family debts by either you or your spouse.
44. Current lawsuits and judgments against either spouse or family business.
45. Deeds to all real estate, in any of the party's name(s).
46. Mortgages and notes for all debt against the real property.
47. Real estate tax and assessment records.
48. Real estate appraisals and/or market analyses prepared anytime during marriage.
49. All bills/statements showing any home improvements, the cost, the date, what work was performed, etc. A home improvement is any improvement that is

beyond the general maintenance of the home (window repair versus window replacement).

50. Electronic financial information either on an Internet site, or on a personal computer, printouts or copies of program data or site data (normally maintained on a data backup diskette).
51. A list of all assets acquired prior to the marriage, including supporting documentation.

Respectfully,

THE COOLEY LAW FIRM



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