



The Divorce Survival Guide

5 Essential Steps to Protect Yourself, Your Children & Your Future

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Introduction

You're Not Alone.

Divorce is one of the most difficult and emotional journeys a person can face. You may feel overwhelmed, fearful, or unsure of what the next step should be.

At Shapiro & Haasbroek Inc., we've helped hundreds of clients navigate this transition — and we created this guide to help you start with clarity and confidence.

In these pages, you'll discover the 5 essential actions you need to take to protect yourself, your children, and your future.



The 5 Essential Steps

Step 1: Understanding Your Legal Rights

Knowledge is your greatest weapon during a divorce.

Many people lose what they're entitled to simply because they didn't know the law or their rights.

At minimum, you must understand:

- How marital property is divided under South African law
- Your rights to maintenance (spousal and child)
- How custody and visitation rights are determined

Important: Even if you and your spouse are "amicable," it's vital to have professional legal advice to protect your interests.



Step 2: Prioritise Your Children's Best Interest

Divorce isn't just about two people — it's about the entire family.

South African courts always prioritise the best interests of the child when deciding custody.

You need to show that your decisions are aligned with emotional stability, safety, and continuity for your children — not just your own needs.

Tips:

- Stay child-focused, not conflict-focused.
- Encourage healthy relationships with both parents (unless safety is an issue).
- Don't use children as messengers or leverage



Step 3: Don't Rush Financial Decisions

Divorce is emotional — but financial decisions must be rational.

Before signing anything:

- Understand the full picture of your finances (assets, liabilities, income, expenses)
- Be aware of hidden debts or liabilities you might inherit
- Think long-term (pension funds, property ownership, trusts)

Reminder: Settling "quickly" to escape emotional pain often leads to long-term financial regret.



Step 4: Build Your Support Team

You can't go through this alone.

You need:

- **A strong legal advisor** who protects your rights
- **An emotional therapist** who supports your healing
- **A financial planner** who helps you plan for the future

Friends and family mean well, but they are not objective professionals. Surround yourself with experts who can help you rebuild — stronger than before



Step 5: Take the First Step – Today

Indecision is your enemy.

Even if you're unsure about whether you want to proceed with divorce, the right first step is to get professional advice early.

Start by:

- Collecting key financial documents
- Writing down your goals and concerns
- Speaking confidentially with a qualified attorney

You deserve clarity. You deserve protection. You deserve a future built on solid ground — not fear.



Quick Checklist



Know your rights



Protect your children's emotional well-being



Think carefully about financial settlements



Build a professional support team



Take action early



Take Control of Your Future Today

The first move is often the hardest — but you don't have to do it alone.

At Shapiro & Haasbroek Inc., we help individuals like you navigate divorce with strength, wisdom, and peace of mind.

Call Us: 012 452 0060

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