



Note that answers given in this section cannot take the place of a lawyer. For legal advice about your specific situation, you must consult a qualified lawyer. See our [disclaimer](#).

"If I file for divorce, how can I protect certain assets (family heirlooms, etc.) from my ex?"

Just know that the family heirlooms given to you by your family do rightfully belong to you, whether they were given to you prior to your marriage or after you took your vows – unless, of course, they were a gift to you together with your spouse. Also know that there are steps you can take to make sure there is no confusion when it comes time to divide property with your ex.

As you separate, the first thing you want to do is to make a written "log," listing all of the family heirlooms you owned before your marriage. Next, ask someone to meet you at your home and either photograph these items or videotape them in this witness' presence. Your next step is to remove the items from your residence and take them to a place where they are securely stored. For instance, you may want to take them to your mother's or another relative's home.

It's also important for you to have some documentation from a relative stating that these items were passed on to you along with the exact date they were given to you. If there seems to be a dispute with your ex over who owns these items, see if you can get an immediate court order to protect these treasured assets by asking the court to allow you to take them from the home and to a safe place. Don't put them in storage where they may get damaged, and don't give them to a mutual friend of you and your ex for safekeeping.

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