

The Working Woman's Retirement Plan Checklist

What women need to know:

- Have you earned a retirement benefit (s)?
- Do you know how much your benefit (s) will be?
- Do you know what happens to your benefit if you change jobs?
- Do you know what happens to your benefit if you retire early?
- Do you have retirement plan information from all of your jobs?
- Do you know how much your Social Security benefit will be?
- Do you know how you can save for retirement if you do not have a retirement plan?

What information women need to ask their spouses:

- Have you earned a retirement benefit (s)?
- Do you know how much the benefit will be upon retirement?
- Will I receive a benefit in the event that you become disabled or die?
- Do you know how much that benefit will be?
- When are you entitled to retire and receive a full or partial retirement benefit?
- Do you know whom to talk to at work about this?
- Does your job allow you to save through a tax deferred savings plan such as a 401(k) plan or a 403(b) account?
- When should we discuss our overall retirement strategy to plan for our future?
- Do you have an Individual Retirement Account? Am I the beneficiary?

What women need to ask their employers:

- Does the company offer a retirement plan?
- Does the plan cover or include my job?
- Can my plan benefits be reduced by Social Security or other government payments?
- How long does it take to earn a legal right to the plan?
- Do we have a tax deferred savings plan such as a 401(k) or a 403(b)? Does it offer employer matching contributions?
- What's the present value your retirement plan, and what would happen if you changed jobs?

What women need to ask if contemplating divorce:

- Did you find an attorney who is knowledgeable about splitting retirement benefits in divorce?
- Am I eligible for a portion of my spouse's retirement plan?
- Will I qualify for a portion of my spouse's Social Security benefit?
- How can I ensure that my husband does not give his retirement plan benefits to someone else?
- Can I ensure that my spouse does not select lifetime benefits in lieu of a joint and survivor annuity?
- Is there a life insurance policy that names you as the beneficiary?