

The Acronyms of Divorce

Article By:

Jennifer Weisberg Millner

The first forms that must be completed in a divorce are the Confidential Litigant Information Sheet (CLIS) and the Certification of Insurance (CI). These forms contain basic but essential information that is necessary for the Court, the parties or litigants, and their attorneys throughout the divorce process.

The CLIS contains information that assists the Court in docketing divorce judgments and orders and allows support to be collected. Information contained in this form includes the parties and children's full names, social security numbers, personal information (height, hair color, etc.), drivers license numbers, and professional license numbers. If support obligations are not paid in the future, this helps the Court in enacting enforcement measures. For example, New Jersey law provides that an individual who is in arrears for support obligations can have their drivers license and professional licenses suspended. This information also allows the Court to take any tax refund that a support payor may be entitled to in order to satisfy outstanding support obligations. The information contained in the CLIS can also be required for subsequent orders, which distribute the respective parties' retirement accounts.

The CI is self-explanatory; it is a certified statement of all insurance policies currently in effect. This includes health insurance, automobile insurance, life insurance, homeowners insurance, and disability policies. The CI gives the Court and the involved parties information about the effective policies. Oftentimes, one party may not know this information, and this is the opportunity to determine the nature of policies in the case immediately. It also allows the parties to ensure that the policies remain in effect and no beneficiaries are changed during a divorce. Many people ask if they can change the beneficiary of an insurance policy while the case is pending (the answer is no), and having the account information allows the other party to make sure there are no changes. It also permits them to discover if there have been any changes that occurred immediately prior to the divorce being filed.

When someone files for divorce or answers a complaint for divorce, they may not know all the information that is requested on these forms. During the process, each person is presented the opportunity to locate the information, so do not worry if there are a few blanks on the forms initially.

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