

LifePrint® Advantage:

HELPFUL STEPS FOLLOWING A DEATH

This two page outline provides a short list of the steps to consider by the Executor and/or Trustees. This is not intended as a complete or comprehensive list of all actions necessary to be taken, it is intended only as a guideline checklist to assist the decedent's representatives by addressing matters which typically require immediate attention.

RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS TO CONSIDER:

1. Contact children and other close relatives.
2. Contact a funeral director and clergy, and make an appointment to discuss funeral arrangements. Request several certified copies of decedent's death certificates.
3. Contact by phone and notify the immediate close friends, business colleagues and employer.
4. Arrange for the care of minors and elderly members of the family.
5. Locate the family's important papers and gather into one file. Gather as many of the decedent's papers as possible, and continue to do so for the next few weeks.
6. Notify an attorney. Make an appointment to review decedent's estate planning documents and discuss taxes that may be due, the need for probate, and form of probate.
7. Notify decedent's financial counselor or tax advisor or other appropriate professionals.
8. Telephone decedent's employee benefits office the following information: name, Social Security number, date of death; whether that death was due to accident or illness; and your name and address. This will allow the company to begin processing benefits immediately.
9. If decedent was eligible for Medicare, notify the local program office and provide the same information as in number 8.
10. Notify life or accident insurers of decedent's death. Give the same information as in number 8.
11. Notify your Social Security office of the death. Claims may be expedited if you go in person to the nearest office to sign a claim for survivor's benefits. Look for the address under U.S. Government in the phone book.
12. If decedent was ever in the service, notify the Veterans' Administration. You may be eligible for death or disability benefits.
13. Record in a notebook all money you or any other immediate family spends with regard to the death.

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EXECUTOR SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO CONSIDER:

1. Begin making a list of all assets of the estate in which the decedent had any interest. In addition to the value of the assets on the list, include how title is held.
2. Obtain originals of all documents relative to the estate - such as wills, trusts, insurance policies, beneficiary designations of life insurance or retirement plans, buy-sell agreements, any other contractual agreements, and similar documents. Within 30 days after locating the original will, it must be filed with the probate court in the county where the decedent last resided.
3. Make a listing of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all beneficiaries of the will and any other heirs who might be entitled to estate assets if the will is contested.
4. Make a preliminary estimate of the estate tax liability and all bills and creditors.
5. Arrange a meeting with all beneficiaries of the will, and all appropriate professionals related to the estate.
6. Open a checking account for the estate and any trusts. It is important that receipts and disbursements are funneled through the proper accounts because later unscrambling can be time-consuming and costly.
7. Obtain at least five certified death certificates.
8. Obtain tax ID numbers for the estate and any trusts, as necessary; consult with a tax accountant concerning final personal tax return, ongoing estate/trust tax returns, and related matters.
9. Open estate and have letters of office issued to begin claim period for creditors and any will contest.
10. Effectuate transferring title of assets to estate or other appropriate party, making certain that tax ID numbers are changed.
11. Examine contents of any safety deposit boxes.
12. Begin gathering data for the preparation of estate tax return, decedent's final income tax return, and any fiduciary income tax return, if appropriate.
13. Contact insurance companies and holders of retirement accounts to begin collection process.
14. Begin preparation of the estate's inventory.
15. Have guardians appointed for any minor beneficiaries.