

ESTATE PLANNING CHECKLIST

12 Things You Can Do to Get Your Estate in Order

One of the greatest gifts you can leave your survivors is an organized estate. The time you spend now will help your loved ones to cope later, and will ensure your wishes will be carried out. Here is a simplified checklist to help you get started on organizing your estate, and depending on your individual situation, you might discover other items to be addressed. It's a good idea to discuss your plans with your loved ones and the executor of your will. You'll also want to consult with your legal, financial and tax advisers.

ESTATE PLANNING

1. **Make or update your will.** A will allows you to determine what happens to your money and possessions when you die. CSS can help! See our website: www.cssservices.ca for our free will planning consultation services.
2. **Create continuing powers of attorney.** These documents allow you to appoint someone to make decisions on your behalf if you become incapacitated. Two documents are needed: Property and Health care.
3. **Consider making a living will or Advance Care Directive.** This document can provide guidance for your Power of Attorney for Health by commenting on possible medical treatments you want taken if you become too ill to state your wishes yourself.
4. **Create a letter of instruction.** This document provides personal instructions and contact information for your survivors to follow.
5. **Consider funeral preplanning.** Preplanning can relieve stress on your survivors. Be sure your family knows the details.

INSURANCE PLANNING

6. **Review your life insurance** for beneficiary arrangements, benefits and continuing costs.



7. **Consider buying health/medical insurance.** There are three major types of coverage that help protect and stretch your assets: Long-Term Care / Disability / Major Medical
8. **Review your RRSP/RRIF, pension and other retirement plans.** Be aware of survivor benefits and other beneficiary arrangements.

ORGANIZING FINANCIAL RECORDS

NOTE: If you store any of the following information on your computer, make a printed list of all your passwords; indicate where any backups are stored and where the information can be found.

9. **Create a summary document listing items below and tell your Executor and/or Power of Attorney for property where to find this document:**
 - a. **Financial accounts** and pertinent information such as income sources and beneficiary designations
 - b. **Location of valuable documents or stored items such as:** deeds, car titles, military records, birth and marriage information, tax and estate planning documents, safety deposit box.
 - c. **Your personal data:** Including your Social Insurance number, driver's license number, your date of birth and the names and phone numbers of family members
 - d. **Organizations you are a member of:** Church, Clubs, Professional Associations
 - e. **Provide easy access to your will and your powers of attorney documents.** Keep signed original copies in your attorney's office as well as a copy in a fireproof file at home.

PERSONAL PLANNING

10. **Write a legacy letter** to your survivors, a chance to "pass it on". Share your faith and values with those you love in a personal letter.
11. **Provide a family member or friend** with the location of spare keys and security codes.
12. **Provide the name of your veterinarian and care instructions for pets,** if appropriate.

