

ESTATE PLANNING AND SURVIVOR'S CHECKLIST

It has been said that the two things which are inevitable to all of us are death and taxes. Yet all too often, death of a loved one seems to sneak up on us and we are less than adequately prepared to deal with all the emotional, administrative and financial matters relating to the loss. Even a temporary incapacitation can be an administrative and financial nightmare if not adequately planned for. The following checklist is offered to provide an excellent reference to the surviving members, executors, and friends which provides the necessary background information and desires of the deceased in regard to decisions surrounding the funeral and initiating settlement of the estate of a husband and/or wife. *(It can easily be used by a single person by just leaving the inappropriate sections blank).*

If you will take a few moments to read and answer the following questions, you will be assisting your family during what will be a very difficult and emotional time. The more decisions you can make through preplanning, the less difficult that period will be for your family and friends.

Please note that no document can deal with the total planning and benefits available for all; however, this packet does provide for much of the information and benefits which may be available to the surviving family members.

We encourage you to consider making a video tape of some remarks you may care to make and have shared with your family and/or friends after your death. Such a tape should not be used in lieu of a Will, Trust or other written document, but can afford you an opportunity to express some of the thoughts you want to share with your loved ones, perhaps things that you found difficult to say in life but which were in your heart. Even though we encourage you to consider making such a video, we even more strongly recommend that you consider sharing some of those heart felt thoughts with your loved ones now, while you are thinking about them and their future.

There is no legal requirement that this document be prepared by a lawyer, notarized or witnessed. However, to avoid confusion with later additions of this document, it is recommended that you sign and date this document and initial and date each page as indicated. It is recommended it be maintained in a safe place which would be easily accessible in the event of your death. We also suggest that you inform family members of its existence.

As a final note, some aspects of this packet are likely to change from time to time. You are encouraged to review and update at least every few years, inserting a new page or possibly just making some pen and ink changes.

Please feel free to copy any part or all of this survivor guide to share with other family members, friends. We only ask that it not be sold or bartered for profit. THANK YOU!

Courtesy of: **Transition Dynamics, Inc., POBox 2352, Columbia, MD 21045 (410) 964-2494**

Dear Family and Friends,

We offer this packet as an indication of our desires regarding arrangements and initial settlement of our estates. We hope that this document will assist our executors, family members and friends in completing those arrangements with as little unnecessary expense, anxiety and confusion as possible.

Love,

(Husband)

(Date)

(Wife)

(Date)

SURVIVOR'S CHECKLIST

I. RECOMMENDED PREPLANNED ITEMS:

VITAL STATISTICS (Husband/Wife)

Name, home address, and telephone no.	County:
Length of residence in State:	
Employer, address and telephone no.:	
Occupation and title:	
Social Security No.:	
War Veterans Serial No(s).:	
Date of Birth:	Place of Birth:
Citizen (if naturalized, naturalization no.):	
Religious affiliation:	
Any aliases, religious names, nick names:	
Fathers Name:	Living: (Yes or No) If Not, when deceased:
Father's birthplace:	
Mother's maiden name:	Living: (Yes or No) If Not, when deceased:
Mothers birthplace:	

LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS (Husband/Wife)

Will/Trust/Power of Attorney/Etc.:
Birth Certificate or Legal Proof of age:
Social Security Cards:
Marriage license/Divorce Decrees:
Citizenship papers:
Insurance policies (life, health and accident, property):
Bank books:
Deeds of property:
Bills of sale (personal property-auto, etc):
Income tax returns, receipts or canceled checks:
Veterans discharge certificate(DD214):
Annuities/Disability claims:
Preburial Certificates/Arrangements:

II. DECIDE OR ARRANGE WITHIN A FEW HOURS/DAYS (Husband/Wife)

Burial or cremation
Burial estate location and which space to open
Memorial type and inscription
Casket/Urn type
Clothing for deceased
Vault or sectional crypt
Type of service (religious, military, fraternal)
Special selection from scriptures
Clergy to officiate
Which funeral director
Place where service is to be held
Time for funeral service
Name of charitable organization - donations suggested in memory of deceased
Providing information for eulogy
Select names for pall-bearers
Flowers
Music
Clothing for you and children
Preparation at home, including food for family and guests
Transportation for family and guests, including planning funeral car list
Checking and signing necessary papers for burial permit
Providing vital statistics about deceased to newspapers
Providing addresses and telephone numbers for all interested people
Answering innumerable sympathetic phone calls, messages, wires and letters
Meeting with funeral director, cemetery representative, clergy, about all details
Greeting all friends and relatives who call
Arranging for meeting relatives who arrive at airport or railroad station
Providing lodging for out-of-town relatives
Make list of callers and floral tributes sent for mailing card of thanks
Arranging for special religious services
Check Will/Trust regarding special wishes
Order death certificates (recommend 5-9 copies)
Look after minor children

III. NOTIFY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (Husband/Wife)

- All relatives
- All friends
- Funeral director
- Memorial Park, Cemetery
- Doctor(s)/hospitals
- Employer of deceased
- Employers of relatives not going to work
- Casket-bearers
- Insurance agents (Life & Health and Accident)
- Banks, Credit Unions, etc. (often includes Accident Insurance)
- Religious, fraternal, civic, veterans organizations, unions
- Newspapers regarding notices
- Attorney, accountant, and executor of estate

IV. MAY REQUIRE PAYMENT FOR SERVICE (Husband/Wife)

- Doctors/nurses/hospitals/ambulance
- Family burial estate
- Memorials
- Funeral director
- Interment Service
- Clergy
- Florist
- Housing of Guests
- Transportation
- Telephone and telegraph
- Food
- Medicine and drugs
- Other current and urgent bills (mortgage or rent, taxes, installment payments)

Valuable Personal Effects (Husband/Wife)(List or refer to other document -Will, Trust, etc)

Item _____	Location _____
Designated Beneficiary _____	
Item _____	Location _____
Designated Beneficiary _____	
Item _____	Location _____
Designated Beneficiary _____	
Item _____	Location _____
Designated Beneficiary _____	

V. GENERAL INFORMATION (Husband/Wife)

Name (Husband/Wife): Location of additional important documents: Children's Birth Certificates: Stocks and Bonds: <hr/>
Deeds or Notes: <hr/>
Safe Deposit Box: Bank: # _____ Key _____ <hr/>
Location of Specific Valuables: <hr/>

Banking and Investment Information (Husband/Wife)(Checking/Savings-Individual/Joint)

Type of Account/Investment:	Acct/Certif #
Bank/Location: _____	
Type of Account/Investment:	Acct/Certif #
Bank/Location: _____	
Type of Account/Investment:	Acct/Certif #
Bank/Location: _____	
Type of Account/Investment:	Acct/Certif #
Bank/Location: _____	
Type of Account/Investment:	Acct/Certif #
Bank/Location: _____	
Type of Account/Investment:	Acct/Certif #
Bank/Location: _____	

Real Estate Owned (Husband/Wife)

Location:
Mortgage1:
Mortgage2: _____
Location:
Mortgage1:
Mortgage2: _____
Location:
Mortgage1:
Mortgage2:

Charge Accounts/Credit Cards (Husband/Wife)

Account _____ # _____ Phone _____
Address _____
Account _____ # _____ Phone _____
Address _____
Account _____ # _____ Phone _____
Address _____
Account _____ # _____ Phone _____
Address _____
Account _____ # _____ Phone _____
Address _____

INSURANCE (Husband/Wife)

Company
Policy # **Type** **Beneficiary**
Owner: **Location** **Amount**
Company Address/Phone

Company
Policy # **Type** **Beneficiary**
Owner: **Location** **Amount**
Company Address/Phone

Company
Policy # **Type** **Beneficiary**
Owner: **Location** **Amount**
Company Address/Phone

Company
Policy # **Type** **Beneficiary**
Owner: **Location** **Amount**
Company Address/Phone

Company
Policy # **Type** **Beneficiary**
Owner: **Location** **Amount**
Company Address/Phone

MEMORIAL INSTRUCTIONS (Husband/Wife)

At my request _____ has consented to carry out the following arrangements in accordance to my wishes.

My Will/Trust, dated _____ is deposited at _____.

The Executor/Executrix/Trustee I have chosen is _____.

Special donor instructions: _____

Location of donor card: _____

Preference in burial Arrangements

Ground Burial Mausoleum Cremation Other

Vault _____ Casket _____ Cemetery _____

Section _____ Lot# _____ Space# _____

Funeral Home/Director _____

Phone # _____

Reserved Interment Space

Location _____

Phone # _____ Location of Documents _____

Type of Service

Church Funeral Chapel Gravesite Cemetery Chapel Home

Clergy _____ Denomination _____

Fraternal Organizations: _____

Military Organizations: _____

Special Arrangements (Scripture, hymns, flowers, music, etc):

Preference in Memorialization

Bronze Memorial _____ Design _____ Border _____

Lettering _____ Emblems _____

Inscription _____

Bronze Urn _____ Design _____ Emblem _____

Crypt Letters _____ Design _____

Crypt Plate _____ Design _____

Other _____

WILLS/TRUSTS

Everyone deserves a Will or a Trust! A Will or a Trust is one of the finest protections you can give to those special people in your life - - a husband or wife, children, relatives, good friends or a special charity. An up-to-date Will or Trust is the only way that you can execute some control over the distribution of your property at death. Otherwise, the State takes over and your property is distributed according to established laws of succession. Your estate lawyer or estate financial planner will help you write your Will or Trust tailored to your exact wishes. (*We highly recommend a Revocable Living Trust as an essential element of your estate planning package.*)

An example to consider: Ed dies and leaves his wife, Margaret, \$1.2 million with no estate tax due. But when Margaret dies and she still has a majority of that \$1.2 million, she can pass \$600,000 on to the children sheltered, but taxes owed on the other \$600,000 will amount to about \$250,000. Do you want your children and grandchildren to receive the money rather than pay high taxes? By using trusts effectively, this can be accomplished. Additionally, you can avoid capital gains taxes on property and investments with these same tools.

If you have not had a Will or Trust drawn up, we sincerely urge you to do so as soon as possible. Transition Dynamics, Inc. does offer an extensive Estate Planning Packet which includes approved formats for Wills, Revocable Living Trusts, Living Wills, Durable Power of Attorney, etc. in a low cost addendum package. (Introductory offer \$29.95 plus postage good until 1 May 1995). *Contact:*

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PO Box 2352
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COMMON TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH ESTATE PLANNING

Testate: Deceased leaving a will or other valid device for the transfer of property, such as a living trust.

Probate: A court supervised process designed to oversee a decedent's affairs which, depending on the size of the estate, is often a slow and expensive process. It is designed to ensure that all the decedent's obligations are satisfied and residual property is disposed of either in accordance with the will or in accordance with state law.

Will: Normally a relatively inexpensive document to draw-up, a Will requires that the probate process be followed, providing the deceased's wishes to the court for court order. Although it can provide great detail in a variety of estate matters, it has been primarily used to dispose of a deceased individual's property in accordance with his/her wishes, name a personal representative, name a guardian for dependent children, provide special provisions to provide protection and management for beneficiaries, and establish procedures for distribution of property.

Living Will: A document a person can use in most states to express their desires in regard to life support systems should they be diagnosed as being terminally ill. This document is often used in conjunction with a durable medical power of attorney (discussed below). Living wills only apply to life support equipment, not other medical decisions.

Durable Power of Attorney: A legal document which gives one person the legal authority to act for another for financial and/or medical matters during the incapacitation of the person who created it. The durable power of attorney must be established before the person who created it becomes incapacitated and legally remains in effect until recinded or until the death of that person. Without a preestablished durable power of attorney, legal authority to act for another who has become incapacitated must be pursued through judicial channels, normally requiring extensive time and a significant amount of money.

Durable Medical Power of Attorney: A legal document which gives one person the legal authority to act for another for medical matters during the incapacitation of the person who created it. The durable power of attorney must be established before the person who created it becomes incapacitated and legally remains in effect until the death of that person. Frequently this document includes specific instructions as to the originators desires regarding life support equipment, or it may be used in conjunction with and reference a valid living will. Without a preestablished durable power of attorney, legal authority to act for another who has become incapacitated must be pursued through judicial channels, normally requiring extensive time and a significant amount of money.

Living Trust: Normally somewhat more expensive to draw-up then a will, a Living Trust avoids the probate process and therefore, probate costs and delays. It provides a document which allows for the passing of property by trust where one person holds or manages property for the benefit of another. Personal effects are transferred in a timely manner and mechanisms are established to disperse funds to your family. It can eliminate Capital Gains taxes, and in case of catastrophic illness, the trust arrangement can allow for the receipt of full Medicaid benefits. There are numerous additional estate and general tax benefits from a properly executed Living Trust.

Pour-Over Will: A will that directs that the property it represents be transferred to another legal entity/device, usually a trust. If properly used in conjunction with a living trust with a majority of the significant property items already included on the trust, the pour-over will can ease the transfer of property not already contained on the living trust, often through oversight or omission. Since it is a "will," property contained on that document does not avoid the probate process.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Social Security is a form of insurance that plays a very important part in estate planning. Most of us are entitled to some form of these benefits. However, Social Security benefits are not paid automatically. You must apply for these benefits on special forms and certain documents must be furnished at that time.

How To Claim (documents usually needed)

1. Certified Copy of the Death Certificate
2. Social Security Number for Deceased and Each Person Eligible to Receive Benefits
3. Copy of Marriage Certificates, Adoption papers, Divorce Decrees, etc.
4. Certified Copies of Birth Certificates of Deceased and Each Person Eligible to Receive Benefits
5. W2 Forms and Income Tax Returns for Last Three Years
6. Disability Proof for children over 18
7. Receipt for funeral bill (if applicant is other than the surviving spouse)
8. Proof of support (if applicant is other than parent or husband)

Death Benefit

A lump sum will be made to the surviving spouse if he or she was living in the same household with the insured person at the time of death. If no qualified spouse survives, the payment can be made to anyone who paid part of the burial expenses. Application must be made within two years of the date of death.

Survivor's Payments

If an insured person dies, the widow, dependent widower, children and dependent parents of that person may be eligible for monthly survivor's payments.

Contact the social security office near you for additional facts, updated information, and assistance. This information should be reviewed at least once every few years due to the numerous changes which occur. Additional copies of your Social Security card can be obtained by calling your local Social Security Administration Office listed in your local area phone book.

U.S. TREASURY BILLS/SAVINGS BONDS

For information and assistance concerning redemption of a deceased's Treasury Bills, contact the Bureau of the Public Debt, Department A, Washington, DC 20239-1000. For inquiries concerning Savings Bonds, contact the Bureau of the Public Debt, Bond Visions, 200 3rd Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101

ARMED FORCES RELATED BENEFITS

Deceased members who served in the armed forces may be entitled to additional benefits such as Servicemen's Group Life Insurance, Survivor Benefit Plan, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Survivor's and Dependent's Education Assistance, and Home Loans. You should contact the Personal Affairs Office at the military base nearest to you. They can provide information and assistance concerning eligible benefits.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Veterans' survivors are entitled to many burial related benefits. However, these benefits will not be paid automatically. Claims for Veterans' benefits must usually be made within two years from the date of final interment. It is recommended that you apply for your Social Security benefits before applying for additional veterans benefits. If the deceased ever served in the Armed Forces, there are benefits to which you may be entitled. As an honorably discharged veteran from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force or Coast Guard, you are generally entitled to:

1. A burial allowance limited to \$300 for expenses for burial and funeral of the deceased. This allowance will be paid only for veterans who were entitled to receive a Veterans Administration pension or compensation.
2. An allowance of \$150 payable towards the burial plot expenses of a Veteran who is not buried in a national cemetery.
3. A burial flag, that can be given to next of kin or friend of deceased.
4. Bronze Memorial or headstone.

Veterans benefits are frequently altered and revised, and there may also be additional Veterans benefits from your country and state. To determine your eligibility, get updated information, or to file your claim. contact your local Veteran's Administration (phone number can be found in your local area phone book) or write the Veterans Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO 63100.