

 Eagle Financial
Publications

TO MY HEIRS:

A BOOK OF FINAL
WISHES AND
INSTRUCTIONS
AND A GUIDE TO
MY ESTATE

Bob Carlson

IMPORTANT NOTE: This special report is for information and educational purposes only.

To My Heirs: A Book of Final Wishes and Instructions and a Guide to My Estate Copyright
© 2024, by Eagle Products, LLC. All rights reserved.
No quotes or copying permitted without written consent.

Published by:

Eagle Products, LLC
122 C St. NW Suite #515
Washington, DC 20001
800/552-1152
Email: CustomerService@RetirementWatch.com
Website: www.RetirementWatch.com

A Guide for You and Your Heirs

How much do your spouse, children or other heirs know about your financial life? What about the executor (or executors) of your estate? Would any of them know enough about what you own and owe to manage and settle your estate efficiently? Would they even know where to find the information needed to have a handle on the situation?

After someone passes away, the estate must be processed and settled. Even if you use a living trust to avoid probate, your financial affairs must be managed and your assets passed to the next generation of owners. In most families, the spouse and children have little or no idea how to begin organizing and managing a loved one's affairs. Instead of being presented with an organized overview of the estate, they have to spend time, sometimes considerable time, digging through papers, files and records. The problems are multiplied when any digital records or assets are involved. It might be difficult or even impossible to find the access information, such as passwords. The law regarding digital assets is uncertain in most states, so even a lot of emails and telephone calls might not unlock the information and access needed.

That's why a will is not enough. Even a great estate plan, an airtight will and the right trusts could come short of your goals. Your final wishes still might not be fulfilled, and your property still might not be distributed or handled as you desired. Or the process of settling your estate could take more time and cost more should this be the case.

There also are many issues that aren't covered by a will, living trust or other estate planning documents. Many types of property pass to the next owner outside of

the will, such as annuities, life insurance, retirement accounts, jointly owned property, and others. A number of non-financial decisions also are not part of a will but must be taken after a person passes. These include decisions regarding organ donations, funeral and memorial services, notifying people and organizations, maintaining property or businesses and more.

A key element of a successful estate plan is a guide for your executor, loved ones and heirs. Unfortunately, many people fail to leave their executors and heirs clear, full records of their assets and liabilities or their final instructions and wishes. Records often are not well-organized or kept in one place. The result is that family members spend considerable time searching for necessary records and documents, sometimes never finding them. Sometimes loved ones are not even aware of an asset, benefit, or property and never claim it.

I've long stated that the best gift that can be left to heirs is a memorial letter, book, or a complete record of your estate and wishes. This would reduce stress and frustration, save time, probably save money and preserve assets, ensure better decisions are made and generally make your death less painful to your loved ones. It doesn't do your survivors much good if only you know where everything is and whom to call for help.

To help you, I've put together this workbook for loved ones. It has key checklists your executor, trustee and heirs can consult. These checklists detail the steps detail the steps your executor, trustee and heirs need to take and the relevant information. The workbook also contains the detailed lists your heirs will need, such as people to contact, information

on key financial assets and liabilities, and where key items are located.

Your goal should be to make this workbook as complete and up to date as possible. Don't try to complete the workbook in one session. It is comprehensive. For many people, this will be the first time that all of this information has been organized. It is better to go through it quickly at first, completing the items you know. Then in subsequent sessions of an hour or two hours, go through it more carefully as you gather the other information and write it in the appropriate areas. Some areas require thought before completing them. I expect many people will take months, even up to a year, to complete the workbook. After that, it should be relatively easy to keep it up to date.

Here are some other tips for maximizing the value of this workbook:

- Not everyone's situation is the same. The forms are written to be flexible and also comprehensive. Cross out or write "N/A" next to the items that do not apply to you. That lets survivors know that you reviewed the items; they won't think it is incomplete and go looking for the information. Other items can be adapted to suit your situation by making notes in the appropriate areas or even in the margins.
- The electronic version of this workbook allows you to make entries directly into the workbook on your computer. Then, save the revised version as entries are made. This makes updates easier. You can save a fresh copy with each update, putting the current date on the file name. Or you can overwrite the old version, so there is only one version on your computer.
- If you complete only a paper copy instead of an electronic one, consider making a photocopy of each blank page and completing a set of photocopies. That way you will have the original available to make more copies when updates of one or more pages are required. Some people punch holes in the completed copies and put them in a three-ring binder. You can add dividers with labels so that each section is easy to find and can include the appropriate financial statement or other documents.
- The workbook should be accompanied by copies of key documents when feasible. The workbook has space to enter the location of the documents. But you might want to keep it with copies of key documents such as your will, trusts and others.
- You also might want to write a letter or letters to accompany the workbook. There are several types of letters to consider.



One type of letter is a restatement or emphasis of key points in the workbook and is addressed primarily to your executor, trustee and perhaps those who will inherit key assets. If you want individual personal assets given to certain people, say so in the letter rather than a will. Some people go a step farther and give specific instructions or suggestions about managing or disposing of certain items in the estate. If you have done significant planning regarding the treatment of a large individual retirement account (IRA) or a business, for example, you might want to summarize your intentions and keep that document in the binder. Or you might own special assets, such as art or collectibles, with which your heirs might not be familiar. These merit special instructions on how to care for or sell them.

Some people also use such a letter, or a separate letter, to give final personal messages to loved ones. This is sometimes known as an ethical will or a family love letter. It has become more popular in recent years. The letter can remind loved ones of specific memories, give them encouragement or advice or present general philosophical thoughts.

- Review and update the workbook regularly. At least once a year you should review the forms to make sure they still are complete and accurate. Also update any attachments you have included. Check to ensure that the contact information has not changed. When insurance policy renewals arrive, be sure the policy numbers and contacts still match those in this workbook.
- While it is advisable to keep photocopies of important documents with this workbook, keep originals or key documents in a safe place. A safe deposit box or fireproof safe are the ideal places for storing important documents.
- Make sure your executor and key heirs know about this workbook and its contents. Your work and good intentions will be for naught if nobody knows to consult this book.

The workbook can have other benefits.

As I said, for many people, it will be the first time all this information is organized in one place. Having all of this information compiled is likely to enable you to organize

and manage your financial affairs more efficiently. You might learn of gaps in your financial plan, out-of-date features and more. Compiling this information also can make the estate planning process more efficient and less expensive. Complete as much of this workbook as you can and give a copy to your estate planner. That will give the estate planner much of the information that is needed to work on your plan.

A key to securing the maximum benefits from using this workbook is to select very carefully an executor or executors of your estate (or trustees of your living trust). The executor of the estate submits the will to the probate court with the legal advice of the attorney. If there is no will, the court will appoint an executor or administrator for the estate. The executor and the attorney usually go to the probate court within one month of the person's death. Probate is a civil proceeding establishing the will, marshaling and protecting the assets, paying the debts and settling the estate by distributing the assets. The executor will have to generate most of the information in this workbook in order to probate the estate, and the process will be faster and less expensive if you compile the information.

This workbook should improve your estate plan, but it is not a substitute for regular estate planning documents. You still need a will, powers of attorney, trusts, life insurance, perhaps a living will, organ donation forms, etc. You also need to complete the beneficiary designations on your retirement accounts and benefit plans. This workbook is another tool to ensure that the maximum amount of your wealth passes after-tax to the people to whom you intended.

FOR THE
LOVED ONES
OF

ORGANIZATION OF
ASSETS PERSONAL
HISTORY
FINAL WISHES

Guide for My Loved Ones

Dear Loved Ones:

I created this workbook to make things as easy as possible for you. My hope is to answer many of the questions that cannot be answered in a will. I also hope to have spared you from making many difficult decisions by doing so myself and recording them here. I also have tried to make settling my estate and other financial affairs easier by providing details about my assets, debts, benefits and other matters.

This workbook begins with a checklist of the steps the executor will need to take. The rest of the workbook provides information that should make it easier to take those and other steps. You'll find information, the location of documents and other items, and people to contact. Finally, you'll find some notes and other messages from me.

Signed,

My Executor's and Survivors' Checklist

What to do immediately after passing (those that apply are checked):

- ☐ Authorize donation of organs or notify medical personnel I'm an organ donor.
- ☐ Contact medical school for body bequeathal.
- ☐ Contact funeral director or memorial society.
- ☐ Notify friends, relatives, and employer or associates.
- ☐ Notify executor if not already done
- ☐ Maintain a list of flowers, cards, donations and other expressions of sympathy.
- ☐ Arrange for friends and relatives to help as needed with childcare, pets, shopping, cooking, telephones, etc.
- ☐ Arrange for care of perishable food, plants and disposables as needed. ☐ Arrange for the security of homes, cars, motor homes, business and other property. ☐ Arrange funeral or memorial service.
- ☐ Arrange for cemetery lot, mausoleum or crypt.
- ☐ Provide obituary information to media.
- ☐ Arrange for after-service gathering for friends and relatives.
- ☐ Obtain a minimum of eight certified copies of death certificate.

What to do within two weeks of passing:

- ☐ Send notes to acknowledge expressions of sympathy.
- ☐ Locate the will and related documents.
- ☐ Locate all other important documents.
- ☐ Obtain final statements from hospital and other medical providers.
- ☐ Notify life insurance companies and file claim forms.
- ☐ Notify other insurance providers and file claims where applicable.
- ☐ Medical, health, disability, accident and travel
- ☐ Vehicle
- ☐ Residence

- ☐ Mortgage insurance
- ☐ Contact post office to change address as necessary.
- ☐ Meet with attorney to commence probate proceedings, if needed, and discuss estate.
 - ☐ Take original will and copies of forms in this book.
 - ☐ Assist with inventory of assets, etc.
 - ☐ File testamentary papers with the court as required
- ☐ Cancel or redirect newspapers and other subscriptions and deliveries.
- ☐ Notify accountant/tax preparer (unless estate lawyer is preparing final income tax returns).
 - ☐ Take copies of appropriate forms in this book.
 - ☐ Take copies of recent tax returns.
 - ☐ Take tax-related records and receipts.
- ☐ Notify broker(s), mutual funds, other financial institutions.
 - ☐ Change ownership of joint accounts by removing my name.
 - ☐ Suspend any open trading orders.
 - ☐ Receive advice and carefully consider actions or changes on IRAs and other qualified retirement plans.
- ☐ Notify banker(s).
 - ☐ Change ownership of joint accounts by removing my name.
- ☐ Notify credit card companies. Close accounts and destroy cards if I am the only signer. Determine any benefits available under the cards.

What to do within one month of passing:

- ☐ Contact and begin applying for appropriate benefits.
 - ☐ Social Security benefits
 - ☐ Veteran's burial benefits and other applicable benefits
 - ☐ Pension benefits
 - ☐ Workers' compensation benefits
- ☐ Contact airlines to apply for transfer of frequent flyer miles to primary beneficiary (unless otherwise assigned in will).
- ☐ Change titles on any jointly owned vehicles.
- ☐ Change titles on any other jointly owned property or accounts.

- ☐ Work with attorney and account custodians of assets owned by a living trust to change control and titles.
- ☐ Obtain valuations of assets as appropriate for probate, estate tax return and other purposes.
- ☐ Begin transition process for business, irrevocable trusts, collections or other complicated assets.
- ☐ Meet with appropriate professionals to discuss employer benefits, treatment of qualified retirement plans and similar assets.

What to do beginning two months after passing:

- ☐ Continue preparation for final income tax return, fiduciary income tax return and estate tax return.
- ☐ Follow up and monitor previous actions that aren't completed.
- ☐ Continue to work on the probate process so that estate can be finalized and distributed.
- ☐ Arrange any distributions from or other changes in trusts.

A Checklist for Executors Only

- ☐ Locate necessary documents: will, trusts, life insurance policies, investment accounts, etc.
- ☐ Meet with the estate attorney to discuss the probate process.
- ☐ Locate and make an inventory of assets.
- ☐ Locate and make an inventory of safe deposit boxes.
- ☐ Submit will to probate court. Seek appointment of executor, administrator or personal representative.
- ☐ File the estate inventory with the court within the required period.
- ☐ Open a bank account in the estate's name, if necessary.
- ☐ Obtain a tax identification number for the estate if necessary.
- ☐ Determine if any credit cards or other debts are covered by credit life insurance.
- ☐ Pay claims of creditors, debts, etc., as allowed by the court or local law. ☐ File insurance claims (life, medical and long-term care).
- ☐ Obtain date of death values for assets; obtain professional appraisals as needed.
- ☐ File a federal estate tax return within nine months of the date of death. ☐ File state inheritance and estate tax returns when applicable.

- ☐ Begin distributing assets to beneficiaries as approved by the court or local law.
- ☐ Jointly held property should be converted to the title of the surviving owner(s)
- ☐ File appropriate settlement documents to close the estate.
- ☐ File income tax returns for the decedent and his or her estate.

PERSONAL HISTORY

1. Name _____

2. Legal Residence _____

3. Telephone Numbers _____

-

4. Birthplace and Date _____

5. Social Security Number _____

6. VA Claim Number _____

7. Service Serial Number _____

8. Date and Place of Military Discharge _____

9. Length of Residence in this State _____

10. Spouse or Next Of Kin _____

11. Children (Name, Birthdate and Social Security Number) Biological:

Adopted:

12. Parents: Mother (Maiden Name) _____

Father _____

13. Grandparents:

Maternal (Grandmother's Maiden Name): _____

Paternal: (Grandmother's Maiden Name): _____

14. Grandchildren:

People to Notify Immediately After Passing

	Name	Telephone	Email
Clergy			
Office/Partner/Staff			
Funeral Director			
Attorney			
Accountant			
Life Insurance Agent			
Trust Officers			
Pallbearers			

Honorary Pallbearers			
Executor/Executrix			
Close Friends & Family			

The contact information for other friends and family can be located here:

_ My body has been bequeathed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please contact the following:

Organizations with Which I've Been Involved That Need to be Contacted:

Name	Contact Person (if any)	My Position	Telephone	Email

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLERGY AND FUNERAL DIRECTOR

1. I would like a
____ Burial Service:

___ in the Sanctuary/Temple.

___ at the funeral home.

___ at the graveside.

___ at _____.

This service should be ___ public. ___ private.

___ Memorial Service:

___ in the Sanctuary/Temple.

___ at the funeral home following immediate cremation or gift of body to medical science at _____.

This service should be ___ public. ___ private.

2. I would the following Biblical or other readings, hymns or music, and eulogists at the services if possible:

3. ___ I request that after the services flowers be used

___ at my family's discretion.

___ as follows: _____

_____.

4. ___ I request that memorial gifts be made and

___ donated to the following agencies or organizations:

_____.

___ that a memorial fund or funds be established to benefit:

_____.

5. I would like to be

___ buried.

___ cremated.

6. I would like to be buried in

___ shroud.

___ street clothes as follows: _____

_____.

7. I would like to be buried with (jewelry, favorite possession, clothes, etc.)

_____.

8. I would like my remains interred in

___ a plain pine box.

___ other: _____.

9. Grave marker:

___ stone

___ bronze

___ other _____

decoration as specified: _____

inscription as specified: _____

10. Gravesite:

___ family plot located _____

family tomb located _____

previously purchased gravesite located _____

would prefer gravesite to be located _____

11. I would like obituaries to be submitted to _____

The text or information to be used is

☐ attached.

☐ to be determined by my executor or family.

12. Other wishes or special instructions:

Places of Safekeeping for Documents and Property

1. I have a total of ____ safe deposit boxes located at the following:

_____. The
key(s) are located _____.

2. I have a strong box(es) located in _____
_____.

The keys are located/or the combinations are: _____.

3. I have home safe(s) or strong box(es) as follows: _____
_____. The key(s) or
combination(s) are: _____
_____.

4. The key or combination to my home desk is: _____
_____.

5. The key or combination to my office desk is: _____
_____.

6. My home files are located _____
_____.

7. My office files are located _____
_____.

8. I have a locker(s) located _____
_____. The key(s)
or combination(s) are _____
_____.

9. My briefcase key or combination is _____
_____.

10. I have a ministorage/warehouse located _____.
The key or combination is: _____.

Where to Find Key Documents and Valuables

Document/Valuable	Location
Adoption papers	
Annulment decrees or judgments	
Athletic awards	
Birth certificates	
Change of name certificate	
Civic awards	
Death certificates	
Divorce decrees or judgments	
Dramatic awards	
Education degrees/certificates	
Education transcripts	
Marriage certificate	
Military awards	
Military separation papers	
Naturalization papers	
Newspaper articles	
Organization awards	
Organization membership certificates	
Tax returns	
Life insurance policies	

Home insurance policies	
Long-term care insurance	
Vehicle insurance	
Disability insurance	
401(k) documents	
IRA documents	
Keogh plan documents	
Medicare card	
Military separation documents	
Other pension plans	
Social Security card	

Workmen's comp papers	
Veterans' benefits	
Cash	
Checking account papers	
Savings accounts or certificates of deposit	
Brokerage accounts	
Mutual fund accounts	
Business licenses	
Business records	
Decrees	
Deeds	

Judgments	
Leases	
Mortgages	
Patents or copyrights	
Rental property records	
Vehicle titles	
Will and codicils	
Living will	
Financial power of attorney	
Medical power of attorney	
Other powers of attorney	
Trust agreements	
Final wishes	
Body bequeathal papers	
Cemetery or mausoleum deed	
Funeral prearrangement contract	
Uniform donor card	
Animal care information	
Security alarm information	
Child care information	

Letter to be sent upon my passing	
List of hiding places for valuables	
Property care information	
Keys to homes	
Keys to other real estate	
Keys to post office boxes	
Keys to vehicles	
Other keys	
List of lock combinations	
Jewelry	
Art	
Antiques	
Collectibles	
Furs	

Principal Residence Recurring Expenses & Service Providers

Service	Provider	Account #	Web address	Username/ID	Password	Frequency	Payment Method	Contact Information	Notes
Electricity									
Gas									
Heating Oil									
Landline Telephone									
Wireless Telephone									
Internet									
Cable/Satellite Television									
Satellite Radio									
Interior cleaning									
Landscaping									
Lawn care									
HVAC repair									
Gutter cleaning									
Security alarm									
Pest control									
Home exterior									
Medical alert									
Computer service									
Handyman									

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Second Residence Recurring Expenses & Service Providers

Service	Provider	Account #	Web address	Username/ID	Password	Frequency	Payment Method	Contact Information	Notes
Electricity									
Gas									
Heating Oil									
Landline Telephone									
Wireless Telephone									
Internet									
Cable/Satellite Television									
Satellite Radio									
Interior cleaning									
Landscaping									
Lawn care									
HVAC repair									
Gutter cleaning									
Security alarm									
Pest control									
Home exterior									
Medical alert									
Computer service									

Handyman									

Additional Residence Recurring Expenses & Service Providers

Service	Provider	Account #	Web address	Username/ID	Password	Frequency	Payment Method	Contact Information	Notes
Electricity									
Gas									
Heating Oil									
Landline Telephone									
Wireless Telephone									
Internet									
Cable/Satellite Television									
Satellite Radio									
Interior cleaning									
Landscaping									
Lawn care									
HVAC repair									
Gutter cleaning									
Security alarm									

Pest control									
Home exterior									
Medical alert									
Computer service									
Handyman									

Information on Principal Residence

	Answer	Notes/other information
Location of key documents:		
Title insurance		
Closing documents		
Other key documents		
Title owner(s)		
Type of ownership		
First mortgage:		
Mortgagee:		
Account #:		
Contact person		

Contact information		
User ID		
Password		
Date of loan		
Interest rate		
Estimated outstanding balance		
Monthly payments		
How payments are made		
Location of documents		
Real estate taxes:		
Taxing jurisdiction		
Recent yearly amount		
Tax/property #		
Included in mortgage?		
If not: Due date		
How paid		
Insurance policies:		
<i>Homeowner's insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy #		

Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Umbrella insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Earthquake insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Flood insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Other insurance:</i>		
Type of insurance		

Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		

Information on Second Residence

	Answer	Notes/other information
Location of key documents:		
Title insurance		
Closing documents		
Other key documents		
Title owner(s)		
Type of ownership		
First mortgage:		
Mortgagee:		
Account #:		
Contact person		
Contact information		
User ID		
Password		
Date of loan		
Interest rate		
Estimated		

outstanding balance		
Monthly payments		
How payments are made		
Location of documents		
Real estate taxes:		
Taxing jurisdiction		
Recent yearly amount		
Tax/property #		
Included in mortgage?		
If not: Due date		
How paid		
Insurance policies:		
<i>Homeowner's insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy #		

Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Umbrella insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact		

information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Earthquake insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Flood insurance:</i>		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		
Due date/how paid		
<i>Other insurance:</i>		
Type of insurance		
Location of policy		
Insurer/Contact information		
Policy#		
Annual premium/frequency		

Additional Debt or Obligations

First debt:		
Type of debt		
Creditor		
Account #:		
Contact person		
Contact information		
User ID		
Password		
Date of loan		
Interest rate		
Estimated outstanding balance		
Monthly payments		
How payments are made		
Location of documents		
Second debt:		
Type of debt		
Creditor		
Account #:		
Contact person		

Contact information		
User ID		
Password		
Date of loan		
Interest rate		
Estimated outstanding balance		
Monthly payments		
How payments are made		
Location of documents		

Vehicles

Description	VIN/Other #	Name(s) on Title	Location of title	Location of vehicle	Notes/other information

Charitable Pledges

Charity	Pledged amount	Contact name/information	Pledge terms	Notes/other information

Donor-advised funds/other charitable assets

Type of Fund	Account Number	Custodian/Sponsor	Website	Contact Name/Info	Username/ID	Password	Amount	Notes/Other

Financial Account Information

Bank/Credit Union Accounts:							
Bank Name	Account #	Owners	Web address	Username/ID	Password	Contact/Telephone Number	Other information

Taxable Broker/Mutual Fund Accounts:							
Institution Name	Account #	Owners	Web address	Username/ID	Password	Contact/Telephone #	Other info

IRAs and Other Qualified Retirement Accounts:

Custodian/ Account Type	Acco unt #	Benefic iaries	Web addr ess	Userna me/ID	Pass word	Contact/Te lephone Number	Other inform ation

Life insurance policies:

Insurer/P olicy Type	Acco unt #	Benefic iaries	Web addr ess	Userna me/ID	Pass word	Contact/Te lephone Number	Death benefi t/othe r infor
-------------------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------	--	--

							matio n
Annuities:							
Insurer/A nnuity Type	Acco unt #	Benefic iaries	Web addr ess	Userna me/ID	Pass word	Contact/Te lephone Number	Regular paymen t/other informa tion
Other Financial Assets:							

Subscriptions

Public ation or Servic e	Acco unt #	Web site	Usenam e/ID	Passw ord	Co st	Expirat ion	Paym ent Meth od	Notes/ other inform ation

Automatic Payments/Deductions

Service/Provider	Account #	Frequency	Amount	How paid	Username/ID	Password	Notes/other information

Digital Assets and Accounts

Description	Website/location	Account #	Username/ID	Password	Other information/comments

Monthly Cash Flow		
Income	Amount	Totals
Annuity		
Dividends		

Interest		
Other:		
Other:		
Other:		
Total income		
Expense		
Mortgage/rent		
Electricity		
Gas/Oil		
Water		
Landline telephone		
Wireless telephone		
Car payments		
Credit cards		
Other debt		
Cable/satellite television		
Internet		
Homeowner's insurance		
Car insurance		
Other insurance		
Real estate taxes		
Property taxes		
Association dues/fees		
Lawn/landscaping		

Other maintenance		
Parking/garage		
Other:		
Total expenses		