Executor duties checklist

Whether you are currently settling an estate or planning to appoint an executor* in the future, the following checklist can help prepare you for the key tasks involved.

If you have questions about any of your duties or want more information about how you can get help from an Estate & Trust professional, please call 1-855-833-6511.

Task	Complete
Preliminary steps	
1. Locate the Will and review it for specific instructions concerning the funeral	☐
2. Assist with funeral arrangements if required	☐
3. Obtain multiple original copies of the proof-of-death certificate, as most organizations that you will deal with as executor require original documentation	☐
4. Ensure the family's immediate financial needs can be met	☐
5. Review any marriage contracts, family law issues or dependant relief issues	☐
6. Probate the Will (if necessary)	☐
7. Pay probate taxes to the provincial government as determined	☐
Beneficiary relationship	
8. Communicate directly with the beneficiaries, gather information and set expectations	☐
9. Provide regular updates to the beneficiaries regarding the status of the administration	☐
10. Provide a copy of the estate summary document to those beneficiaries who are entitled to one	☐
11. Communicate with the residual beneficiaries regarding the distribution process	☐
Safeguarding the estate assets	
12. Locate all of the deceased's assets (including any digital assets such as social media accounts and their associated passwords) and liabilities	☐
13. Notify banks and institutions where the deceased held accounts or had other dealings	☐
14. Cancel all credit card accounts and return cards to issuers	☐
15. Open an estate account to deposit income and pay expenses, transferring any balances	☐
16. Verify that adequate insurance is in place to protect assets	☐
17. Secure and take control of real property, including real estate	☐
18. Manage real estate and contents, arrange for property management and any other related tasks, prior to its sale or distribution	☐
Valuing the estate	
19. Locate all original investment certificates, stocks, bonds, property deeds, etc. in the deceased's personal files and safe deposit box	☐
20. Identify, value and record estate assets as they stood at the date of death	☐
21. Investigate all debts owned by the deceased	☐
22. Apply for and collect the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) death benefit	☐
23. Contact the deceased's employer or former employer regarding pension plans, retiree benefits and death benefits	☐
24. Apply for and collect life insurance and other insurance benefits	☐

Task	Complete
Administering the estate	
25. Review the suitability of investments held in the estate and recommend which assets are to be sold to meet cash requirements	☐
26. Invest any surplus cash until the estate is finalized, selecting from allowable investments	☐
27. Assist in establishing any trusts stipulated in the Will	☐
28. Cancel CPP and/or Old Age Security (OAS) benefits	☐
29. Apply for CPP survivor's pension and/or children's benefits and Allowance for the Survivor	☐
30. Advise the CRA to discontinue or transfer GST/HST credits and child tax benefits	☐
31. Complete documentation and arrange to transfer employment, health, pension and retiree benefits	☐
32. Return the deceased's social insurance card, passport, driver's licence and health card, obtaining any appropriate refunds	☐
33. Pay all debts and settle all legitimate claims prior to the final distribution of assets, obtaining receipts for any payments made	☐
Taxes	
34. Obtain a copy of the last tax return filed by the deceased	☐
35. Complete and file all outstanding tax returns and pay any required income taxes	☐
36. Obtain a Tax Clearance Certificate(s) from the CRA once the Notice of Assessment(s) is received, confirming that all tax liabilities have been settled	☐
Distribution	
37. Begin distributing assets to beneficiaries according to the terms of the Will	☐
38. Distribute specific bequests (personal and household belongings) obtaining receipts from respective beneficiaries	☐
39. Prepare a reckoning of your expenses (and any compensation) as executor	☐
40. Arrange for the final distribution of the remaining assets, obtaining receipts from each beneficiary	☐
41. Prepare a final accounting of all assets, liabilities, expenses and the distribution of assets for the beneficiaries	☐
42. Have each adult beneficiary approve the accounting and sign a release form	☐
43. Advise beneficiaries to consult with a financial advisor	☐

* Estate Trustee with a Will in Ontario; Liquidator in Quebec

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