

ESTATE PLANNING CHECKLIST

7 Things You Can Do to Get Your Estate in Order

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 added to the list. This checklist covers the main areas that need to be addressed. The goal is to ensure that your wishes are carried out and to avoid the state laws and courts to make decisions for you.

1. **Make a Healthcare Power of Attorney.** This Power of Attorney will allow you to appoint someone to make healthcare decisions on your behalf in the event you become incapacitated.
2. **Make a Mental Healthcare Power of Attorney.** This Power of Attorney will allow you to appoint someone to make mental healthcare decisions on your behalf in the event you become incapacitated.
3. **Make a Financial Power of Attorney.** This Power of Attorney will allow you to appoint someone to make financial decisions on your behalf in the event you become incapacitated.
4. **Make a Living Will.** This document comes into play at your final illness and allows you to make decisions yourself as to any life support treatments you want or you want withheld.
5. **Make or update your Will.** A will allows you to determine what happens to your assets and possession when you die, and who executes the will.
6. **Establish a Revocable Trust if appropriate.** A trust on theory works the same as a will except that the trust will avoid probate if funded properly. Assets are titled to the trust name and passes to the beneficiaries named in the document based on your instructions.
7. **Various beneficiary designations.** Check your investments and bank accounts to see if you can add a POD (paid on death) beneficiary or a TOD (transfer on death) beneficiary. Also, a Beneficiary Deed allows you to name an individual on a real estate deed so that the property, upon your death, passes to the individual named on the deed.

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