

THE SURVIVOR'S SURVIVAL GUIDE (AKA "Spare the Heir")

Many of us have worked for years to make sure that our families are well provided for after we are gone. Not only have we made sure they will be provided for, but also we have an up-to-date will that dictates how those hard-earned assets are to be distributed. Moreover, we've executed a durable power of attorney for health care to help our families deal with any end-of-life illnesses. (If not, make or update your will and execute a durable power of attorney for health care NOW.) If so, what more could our survivors ask?

The answer to that question is: lots! Think of the desk, or file cabinet or shoe box in which you keep the records about your retirement plans, life insurance, brokerage accounts and so forth and imagine how long it would take the executor of your estate to discover what your assets are and get them distributed to your heirs. Or do you live in a paperless world, with no paper records? How will your executor get access to your records if he or she doesn't know the password to your computer? There are a great many bits of practical information to which you have access but your survivors may not. A great way to give them peace of mind is to collect this information in one place for their guidance when you are gone.

This paper will provide you with a simple, organized way to list information about your advisors and assets that will make it possible for your executor easily to identify and collect your assets. There are optional sections you can use to indicate preferences as to burial and memorial services, as well as a form which when completed will give the person who writes your obituary accurate and complete information. At the end is a list of the initial steps your survivors should take following your death.

Note: Once this list is compiled, you should make a date with yourself to review and update it annually (New Year's Day? Your birthday?) You can decide whether to actually give copies of this list to your executor, advisors or family members, or you can simply tell them that it exists and where to find it when necessary.

Summary

Part One: List of Key Advisors

Part Two: Location of Key Information

Part Three: Family and Significant Others

Part Four: List of Accounts, Assets and Other Key Financial Information

Part Five: In Case of Incapacity

Part Six: Burial Instructions

Part Seven: Visitation, Funeral or Memorial Service

Part Eight: Information for Obituary

Part Nine: Instructions to My Executor Regarding Distribution of My Personal Belongings

Part Ten: Ethical Will

Part Eleven: First Steps for the Survivor after Death

Part One: List of Key Advisors

| Name | Address | Phone | E-mail |
|------------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Attorney | | | |
| Accountant | | | |
| Tax Preparer | | | |
| Banker | | | |
| Stock Broker | | | |
| Investment Advisor | | | |
| Insurance Agent | | | |
| Doctor | | | |
| Clergyperson | | | |
| Employer or Business Associates | | | |
| Other | | | |

Part Two: Location of Key Information and Documents

Location of will (and any codicils), trust (and any amendments) and other estate planning documents, including beneficiary designations for life insurance, retirement plans and individual retirement accounts:

Location of current tax records and past tax returns (federal, state and local income tax; gift and estate tax and generation-skipping transfer taxes; employment taxes for household help, if any):

Location of durable power of attorney for health care document:

Social Security Number:

Safe Deposit Box(es): location (bank, branch, address), box number and location of key:

Location of birth certificate (or identification of state and county of birth):

Birth dates and location of birth certificates for any dependent children (or identification of the state and county of birth):

Date of marriage and location of marriage certificate (or, if unavailable, state and county in which the marriage occurred):

Information about military service, if any (dates of service, branch of service, serial number, location of discharge certificate): If the latter is unavailable, write the National Personnel Record Center, 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis MO 63132-5200 specifying the branch of service and giving as much detail as possible):

Part Three: Family and Significant Others

List family members and significant others (include nature of relationship, address and other contact information):

Part Four: List of Accounts, Assets and Other Key Financial Information

List of bank accounts (name of institution(s), account numbers, contact information) and location of current account records:

List of savings accounts or certificates (name of institution(s), account numbers, contact information) and location of passbook or savings certificate:

List of investment or brokerage accounts (name of institution(s), account numbers, contact information) and location of current account records:

List of stocks, bonds, Mutual funds, certificates of deposit or other investment certificates not held by broker and location of current records:

List of life insurance policies and annuities (insurance company, policy numbers, contact information for insurer and broker (if any)) and location of current account records:

List of medical coverage insurance (hospitalization, dental, medical, vision, etc.) (insurance company, policy numbers, contact information for insurer and broker (if any), contact information for your primary care physician and location of current account records:

List of homeowner/renters insurance policies (insurance company, policy numbers, contact information for insurer and broker (if any) and location of current account records:

Information about other insurance policies (such as mortgage or loan insurance, accidental death or dismemberment, auto, credit card) including insurance company, policy numbers, contact information for insurer or broker and location of current account records:

List of retirement plans or individual retirement accounts (identification numbers, address of trustee or custodian) and location of current account records and beneficiary designation forms:

Description of any written agreements governing retirement benefits not listed above:

List of real estate held (include location of deeds, contact information for holders of notes or deeds of trust, if any; policy number and contact information for property and casualty company if not listed above):

List of any leases (include location of copies of document) with respect to which you are either landlord or tenant:

Information about any beneficial interests in trusts:

List of motor vehicles, boats and other recreational vehicles (also include contact information for finance company, if any; location of title documents; policy number and contact information for auto or boat insurance company, if not listed above):

List of any partnership agreements and buy-sell agreements for any partnership interests, and location of agreement and records:

Contact information for employer (if still working or if there are retiree or survivor benefits available) and any prior employers with whom there are retirement benefits:

List of credit cards and charge accounts (company name, account numbers and contact information) and location of current account records:

Information about debts owed to me (e.g., deeds of trust, notes, accounts receivable) (also include name of debtor, amount of outstanding balance, date the obligation was incurred) and location of current records:

Information about debts owed by me (also include name of lender, amount of outstanding balance, date the obligation was incurred) and location of current records:

Location of documents pertaining to property held jointly with other owners (other than spouse):

Location of any buy/sell agreements and corporate records regarding ownership interests in a closely held corporation:

List of tangible personal property items which (individually or as a group or collection) have a fair market value in excess of [\$5,000] (e.g., jewelry, art, antiques, coin or stamp collections, furs, etc.):

Charitable trust fund assets (if any): contact information for charitable trust and information about provisions for distribution of remaining assets upon my death:

List and information about personal property on loan to others (what and to whom):

Location of documents concerning any golf or country club memberships:

Name of residence alarm company and pass code:

Neighbors with spare key to residence (if any):

Location of airline mileage program information:

List and information about any assets, documents or information relevant to your financial affairs not otherwise identified above:

Part Five: In Case of Incapacity

Location of my Advance Directive for Health Care and POLST¹

Individuals who hold general or specific powers of attorney that survive incapacity (list specific powers)²:

Primary agent(s) under durable power of attorney for health care:

Individuals who will serve as guardians of any minor children:

See above for information regarding health insurance coverage.

Part Six: Burial Instructions

People to inform of my death (and contact information):

Religious affiliation:

Church or synagogue (address, contact information and name of clergyperson to contact):

I prefer to be (circle one): Buried Cremated

¹ Consider an advance directive for dementia (www.dementia-directive.org).

² Consider using a Vial of Life (www.vialoflife.com).

Disposal of ashes (if applicable):

Name and location of cemetery and location of lot deed, crypt deed or columbarium contract:

Directions regarding body or organ donation³:

Funeral/mortuary home to use⁴:

Coffin specifications (circle one): least expensive mid-range elaborate

At the funeral home the coffin should be (circle one) open/closed.

Directions regarding grave marker (if applicable):

Instructions regarding pets living at the time of death:

Part Seven: Visitation, Funeral or Memorial Service

(a) Visitation: select those of the following that apply:

There should/should not be a visitation

The casket should be at the funeral/memorial service with visitation nearby

The casket should be at the funeral establishment

The casket should be open for viewing

The casket should remain closed

(b) Funeral or Memorial Service: complete the following that apply:

The service should be held at: _____

The casket/ashes should be (circle one) present/not present at the service

The following person(s) should officiate at my service: _____

Only the burial or committal service should be read.

The Holy Eucharist should be part of the service.

_____ ³ Stanford will accept bodies for medical research and will dispose of the body after its use.

⁴ See Bay Area Funeral Consumers Association for information about protecting the right to choose meaningful, dignified, affordable death care, and providing information to help make these choices (www.ba-fca.org).

Suggested pall bearers (if casket will be present): _____

The following readings should be used for my service: _____

The following individuals should participate in my service as eulogists, readers, musicians or otherwise: _____

The following hymns should be used for my service: _____.

There (circle one) should/should not be flowers at the service. It should be suggested that in lieu of flowers funds be sent to _____.

Part Eight: Information for Obituary

Full Name:

Date and Place of Birth:

Full Names of Parents:

Names and birth dates of children:

Names of Brother and Sisters:

Names of significant others who should be mentioned:

Schools Attended and Degrees Received

Name of Spouse:

Marriage Date and Place:

Vocation, Work Life and Employer(s):

Honors or Recognitions:

Civic, Community and Volunteer Involvement and Memberships:

Interests and Hobbies:

Suggestions for Organization to Receive Memorial Gifts:

Other Relevant Information:

Location of photograph to be used with obituary:

Part Nine: Instructions to My Executor Regarding Distribution of My Personal Belongings

Unless otherwise specified in or pursuant to my will, I direct that my personal belongings be distributed as follows:

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Recipient</u> |
|-------------|------------------|
| [list] | [list] |

Or, the following is the location of a letter to my executor with instructions as to the distribution of personal belongings:

Identification of any significant collections (e.g., furniture, art works, jewelry) and suggestions for their distribution or disposal:

Identification of any significant family historical materials or memorabilia and suggestions for their distribution or disposal:

Part 10: Ethical Will

Consider an ethical will or legacy letter as a way to share your values, blessings, life lessons, hopes and dreams for the future, love and forgiveness with your family, friends and community. This is not a legal document and does not distribute your material wealth.

Part Eleven: First Steps for the Survivor after Death

1. Obtain a copy of the deceased's will and other estate planning papers.
2. Notify Social Security at [obtain telephone number] to inform them of death. You will want to determine what survivor benefits may be available.
3. Order at least 12 copies of the death certificate through the funeral director or directly from local authorities.
4. If deceased was a veteran, there may be a burial benefit available. Contact the regional Veterans' Affairs office for information. Be prepared to provide VA with information about military service.
5. Contact the deceased's current employer (or former employer if retired) regarding employee benefits (including COBRA rights of survivors, stock option exercise deadlines, if applicable) and final paycheck. Contact prior employers to determine if retirement benefits are available.

6. If the deceased was a member of a union, contact the union for information about any death benefits.
7. If the deceased was already receiving pension payments, contact the payor to inform them of the death and determine whether any survivor benefits are payable.
8. Contact all life insurance companies to obtain applications for death benefits.
9. Information about filing income tax returns for the decedent can be found in IRS Publication 559, Information for Survivors, Executors and Administrators.