



ESTATE Box

Executor Guide Checklist

The following checklist will give you an idea of what to expect in the months and years of settling an estate. It's important to note that each estate settling process is different and can vary depending on the unique estate.

This resource contains Canadian specific information only and should not be treated as legal advice on any subject matter. Please contact an industry expert if you require legal advice.



Executor Guide Checklist

Preliminary Arrangements

- Approve [organ donation](#) (if applicable)
- Locate the most recent will, plus [codicils or memoranda](#)
- Assist with finding care for or adoption of the deceased's pets
- Obtain the deceased's identification and credit cards
- Advise the deceased's employer of the death (if applicable)
- Obtain multiple original [death certificates](#)
- Report their passing through EstateBox in order to gain full access to their personal EstateBox
- Make or assist with funeral arrangements
- Provide the beneficiaries named in the will with a copy of the will or relevant portions
- Find out if any dependent family members have immediate financial needs
- Determine if the spouse or partner will have enough support
- Review status of any legal actions in which the deceased was involved
- Prepare a list of the deceased's assets and liabilities
- If the debts and liabilities in the estate are likely to exceed the assets, obtain professional advice



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Preliminary Arrangements (continued)

- Determine whether probate is required. If it is, arrange the necessary court application and payment of [probate fees](#).
- Obtain insurance for vacant real estate
- Redirect the deceased person's mail to your address
- Notify deceased person's landlord, if applicable

Secure the assets

- If the deceased was a sole proprietor or owner/manager of a business, arrange for the business to continue; secure all physical assets and documents
- Arrange for the safe storage of personal valuables and important documents
- If the deceased's home will be vacant, advise the police and insurance company; check the property frequently
- Ensure there is appropriate insurance coverage on the estate's assets
- Cancel leases, health insurance coverage, driver's license, cable, telephone, club memberships, subscriptions, credit cards, professional memberships; request refunds due
- Advise private insurers of the deceased's death; if sums are owing under a policy, arrange payment
- Advise utility companies of the death and cancel utilities once the property is sold, vacated, or passed on
- If the deceased was receiving spousal or child support from a spouse or former spouse, advise the spouse or former spouse



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Secure the assets (continued)

- Ascertain and administer all digital assets
- Memorialize (or cancel) social network accounts
- If the deceased was the sole or co-executor of an estate whose admin is not complete, or was the sole or co-trustee of a trust, advise the co-executors or co-trustees of the deceased's death and obtain professional advice on whether you have any responsibilities
- [Return the deceased person's identification](#) to the relevant authorities - SIN card, passport, driver's license and health card

Government Benefits

- Cancel Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan benefits
- Apply for CPP death benefit and survivor's pension

Financial Institutions

- Provide notification of death to financial institutions, [Equifax](#), and [Transunion](#)
- Open an estate account and name it so that it's clear it's estate money ("The Estate of [Deceased]")
- Close the deceased's bank accounts after transferring balances into the estate account
- If the deceased ran a business, organize business accounts and seek legal/tax advice on transition or sale of the business
- Check if the deceased had any joint accounts - they may not fall to the estate
- Transfer all investments into the estate or to the executor



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Value the Estate

- Build an inventory and valuation of assets and liabilities
- Obtain a professional valuation of assets over \$3k as of date of death
- Determine the adjusted cost base for tax purposes of each capital property
- Contact employer(s) to arrange payment of wages or pension benefits due
- Clear and close the deceased's safety deposit box
- If the deceased was in a business partnership, ascertain the estate's entitlements and liabilities
- If the deceased owned shares in a private company, ascertain the estate's rights and responsibilities
- Determine whether there are any registered investment plans (RRIFs and/or RRSPs)
- Collect insurance benefits
- Ask around to see if the deceased was named in a will as a beneficiary. If that estate has yet to be distributed, advise the executor(s) and/or trustee(s) of the deceased person's death and collect any assets or payments.



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Taxes and Debts

- Do the income tax return for the deceased for the period from January 1st to the year and date of death
- Collect the income tax return for each year the estate existed before it was settled
- Do a final return if the estate lasted more than a year
- Submit CRA notification to [update record](#)
- Request [Canada Revenue Agency Clearance Certificate](#)
- Cancel credit cards and ensure balances are paid off
- Advertise for creditors by posting a notice (see local requirements for where to post). This ensures that all creditors come forward and that as an executor, you do not become personally liable for any debts that were not paid prior to distributing the estate
- Settle all debts prior to distributing assets - keep good records and documentation of all transactions

Distribute Assets to Beneficiaries

- Transfer ownership of assets to the estate
- Ensure that assets are distributed in accordance with the terms set out in the will
- Keep accounting records of all transactions related to the estate
- Obtain releases from beneficiaries
- Pay all legacies and obtain receipts
- Apply for executor compensation, if applicable



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EstateBox

For more information on being an executor, check out our [Executor Guide](#) and other carefully curated estate planning [resources](#) on our website.

EstateBox is modernizing life and legacy planning by digitizing all your key details, documents, and assets related to your estate. Think of it as your virtual “box” where you control who accesses and views your information.

[EstateBox gives you peace of mind](#) today, and peace for your family later.



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