

Beyond the Documents: Action Steps That Create Peace of Mind

Daily Financial Affairs

- Train each other on how bills are paid and where passwords are kept
- Share budgeting tools or places you hold organized data about your money
- Print your balance sheet annually and income statements
- Contact each provider (utilities, bills) to add authorized users
- Establish a legacy contact on your password keeper, phone, email, and social media accounts
- If digital assets are owned, discuss how the keys are kept and where the wallets are held

Running the Household

- Create a Household Operating Manual notebook
- Notate any groceries, household goods, pet food, or medications on auto-order/renewal
- Keep a list of all professionals that service the household and their contact information, including lawn service, house cleaning, and pest control
- Discuss any care you provide to any family members, neighbors, animals, or plants
- List appliances or devices that require regular maintenance, and who handles it, and when? e.g., changing water filter, furnace filters, gutter cleaning
- Maintain a file of warranties or service plans in place
- Document companies you hold points/airline miles/rewards

Childcare

- Determine who should care for your children if you pass, confirm their willingness
- Consider whether you'd prefer to have their guardian be responsible for their money as well
- If no, determine a separate trustee or financial custodian
- Create a file with their pediatrician's contact information, their medical diagnoses, medications, allergies, and care preferences
- What values would you like their guardian to instill?

Pet Care

- Determine who should care for your pets when you pass, and communicate this desire

- Consider providing a small amount of money through your estate to help pay for the pet's care
- Create a file with your veterinarian's contact information, your pet's medical diagnoses, medications, food, treats, and care instructions

Health Care

- Retain a listing of doctors, medical diagnoses, surgery dates, and medication dosages
- Notate details about any medical devices (glasses, hearing aids, wheelchairs, prosthetics, cpap)
- Provide medical directives and health care proxy forms to all medical providers
- **Complete a HIPAA Release Form** and share it with authorized representatives
- If over age 65, complete the **Medicare Authorized Representative Form** or add authorized users
- Add authorized users to health insurance policies and long term care policies
- Notate or discuss your wishes for long-term care and resources dedicated to the costs

Account Titling/Beneficiary Review

- Retitle bank accounts to trust, joint name, or add payable on death (POD) registration
- Retitle investment accounts to trust, joint name, or add transfer on death (TOD) registration
- Title real estate properties into a trust, LLC, or add joint ownership
- Title your vehicle to a trust, add joint ownership, or add transfer on death registration
- Review beneficiary designations on all retirement accounts, investment accounts, equity compensation, insurance policies and your HSA account.
- Add contingent beneficiaries and list your trust, if applicable
- Understand what happens to each income stream at death (i.e. a pension)

Document Storage

- Purchase a **waterproof/fireproof safe** to store your documents and supplementary information collected through this process
- Purchase clear page protectors to store birth certificates, SSN cards, and other legal documents
- Consider one of the following organizers: **Amazon.com: Savor | Folio Document Organizer** and **Peace of Mind Planner**
- Documents to consider keeping in a secure electronic location:
 - Copy of passports/IDs
 - Copy of birth certificates

- Copy of marriage certificate, divorce decree, if applicable
- Copy of titles/deeds
- Copies of any of the written wishes outlined above
- Copy of your list of medical diagnoses, surgery dates, medication dosages, glasses prescriptions/contacts or other relevant health data you'd like quick access to if needed while out of town.
- Copy of your budget ledger
- Communicate the document locations to your executor/trustee

Personal Property

- For your estate planning file, create a personal property memorandum
- List any specific family heirlooms or meaningful possessions you'd like to go to a specific person
- No special format; a Word document or Excel document is fine. List the item, where it's kept, and who it should go to
- Think about jewelry/watches, collectibles, art, instruments, furniture, etc
- Document wishes regarding the donation or disposal of items not specifically listed above
- Clear out items that you don't need, don't use, and don't plan to pass on to someone

Final Wishes

- Do you want to be buried? If so, where?
- How would you prefer to be dressed? Would you like anything buried with you?
- Who should play a role in your funeral? (reader, eulogy, pallbearers, music)
- Are there any flowers you specifically want or would not want?
- Any pictures you prefer to use for your obituary and funeral service?
- If cremated - what are your wishes for your ashes?
- Do you have any specific wishes regarding organ donation?
- Who would you like to be contacted about your death, invited to the funeral? Any long-lost friends/relatives your partner may not know directly or have close contact with?
- Would you like a donation made in your honor to a specific charity?

Other

- Business Ownership, Investment Real Estate, and Alternative Investments have additional considerations, consult with your attorney