



Checklist: Steps to Take When a Loved One Passes Away



Here are some immediate, shorter, and longer-term financial planning steps to take in the event of a death of a loved one.

Immediate Steps

- Call your loved one's estate attorney who drafted their trust and other estate documents to start the estate distribution process:
 - Review next steps based on your loved one's will, trust, titling, and beneficiary designations.
 - File documents with the county of residence, and determine if you need to file documents to change property ownership.
- Request multiple certified copies of the death certificate (10 copies are typically sufficient); Social Security, their life insurance carrier, and other financial institutions will require them.
- Call Social Security to file for survivor benefits if your loved one did not have a spouse – the representative will be able to calculate the precise benefits available based on their earnings record.
- Notify disability and health insurance carriers.
- File claim with life insurance carrier and determine where the proceeds should be held.
- Notify your loved one's employer, if relevant.

Shorter-term Steps

- If applicable, assess your overall financial situation – income, expenses, assets & liabilities – and long-term projections.
- Notify your loved one's CPA.
- Explore refinancing on a mortgage if applicable.
- Notify property/casualty insurance carrier.
- Cancel credit cards in your loved one's name.
- Transfer ongoing accounts and services to your name or the name of your loved one's beneficiary.
- Update estate documents with an estate attorney (Will, Durable Power of Attorney, Advance Health Care Directive), especially if your loved one was the primary beneficiary.
- Review and update beneficiaries on your IRA and any other financial accounts and insurance.

Longer-term Steps

- Submit letter, death certificate, and driver's license to DMV to request your loved one's driver's license be canceled.
- To protect against identify theft, notify credit reporting agencies and request that a "deceased" alert be added your loved one's credit report.
- Review their credit report via Annual Credit Report
- Search for [unclaimed property](#).



Should you have any questions or need guidance, please contact one of our advisors who can assist you.