

Estate Planning Checklist

Checklist · 20 items · 7 sections

Every estate planning document and step every adult needs. Protect your family and assets with this complete checklist of wills, trusts, and legal documents.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/estate-planning-checklist>

CORE DOCUMENTS

- Last Will and Testament: drafted and signed before a notary
HIGH
Without a will, the state decides how your assets are distributed
- Revocable Living Trust: consider if estate over \$150K or own real estate
HIGH
Avoids costly probate process; keeps distribution private
- Durable Power of Attorney (financial): designates who handles finances if incapacitated
HIGH
- Healthcare Proxy / Medical Power of Attorney: designates healthcare decision maker
HIGH
- Living Will / Advance Healthcare Directive: documents end-of-life medical wishes
HIGH
Specifies DNR orders, life support, and organ donation wishes
- HIPAA Authorization: allows medical providers to share information with chosen people

FOR PARENTS

- Guardianship designation for minor children: named in will
HIGH
The most critical reason to have a will if you have children under 18
- Letter of instruction: informal document with funeral wishes, account info, passwords

INSURANCE & BENEFICIARIES

- Life insurance policies: reviewed, adequate coverage, beneficiaries updated
HIGH
- 401(k), IRA, pension beneficiaries: review annually (override your will!)
HIGH
Retirement accounts and life insurance pass directly by beneficiary designation, bypassing your will

- Bank account beneficiaries (POD: Payable on Death) set up

HIGH

- Brokerage/investment account beneficiaries (TOD: Transfer on Death) set up

HIGH

PROPERTY

- Real estate: deeds reviewed, title clear, consider transfer to trust

HIGH

- Vehicle titles: transfer on death or into trust if desired

DIGITAL ASSETS

- Digital assets inventory: accounts, passwords, crypto, social media wishes

- Online accounts: designate legacy contacts (Facebook, Google Inactive Account Manager)

ORGANIZING DOCUMENTS

- List all financial accounts: banks, investments, credit cards: in one document

HIGH

- Store documents safely: fireproof safe or safe deposit box; tell executor location

HIGH

- Share location of documents with executor/trusted person (not necessarily contents)

HIGH

ONGOING

- Review and update estate plan every 3-5 years or after major life events

HIGH

Major events: marriage, divorce, new child, death of beneficiary, moving to new state