



Clarity...Insight...Partnership...

Redefining what a wealth manager does

Surviving Spouse Checklist

This checklist does not represent the order in which to address the issues; it is only a preliminary guideline and is not intended to be a comprehensive list of things to consider.

Getting Organized:

Locate your important documents:

- Will
- Trust documents
- Insurance policies (to include life, LTC, DI, Auto and homeowners)
- Financial statements
- Property deeds
- Automobile titles
- Divorce settlement or child support orders
- Identify spouse's debts (cancel spouse's credit card immediately)

Where to locate documents, records or passwords:

- Personal files
- Safety deposit box or personal home safe
- Tax returns
- Computer files or thumb drives
- Credit reporting agencies
- Incoming mail (statements and notices)
- Email notifications (maintain spouse's email for up to 6 months)
- Address book

List your team of consultants to include their names and phone numbers:

- Executor/Successor Trustee

- Attorney
 - CPA/Tax Advisor
 - Insurance Agent
 - Banker
 - Financial Advisor/Stock Broker
 - Guardian (should anything happen to both parents)
1. Obtain several certified copies of the Death Certificate (12-24) from the mortuary or your local department of health (www.vitalrec.com). You will need to send them for credit card, mortgage, utility, insurance & other companies to confirm the death of your spouse.
 2. Re-title assets, including real estate, automobiles and other property or interests held jointly with right of survivorship.

Life Insurance:

- Contact Insurance agent or Company to submit claims on your spouse's policies to include employer, personal or VA coverage.
- Make beneficiary changes on your policies and ensure they are still meeting your current needs now that you are widowed.
- Check to see if your spouse's Long Term Care or Disability policies have accidental death coverage.
- Check with your spouse's employer for life insurance coverage on employees

Financial Professional:

- Notify financial professional of adult children or Trustees that provide guidance to you, include their names and contact numbers.
- Change joint Bank, Brokerage, Mutual funds and Annuities into your name
- Rollover 401k or IRA assets from spouse's Retirement plan, check with spouse's employer regarding pension pay out options if a pension exists.
- Review all investments to make sure they are still meeting your specific needs
- Make necessary beneficiary changes on all accounts
- If not retired, consult your advisor regarding ongoing contributions to retirement plans
- Notify your financial professional of any Charitable intentions

Legal:

- Settle the Estate, notify beneficiaries
- Establish a new power of attorney for yourself
- Name a new healthcare proxy within your healthcare directive
- Create a new Will and establish appropriate Trusts
- Appoint new Guardians and/or Trustees

Health Insurance:

- Contact spouse's Human Resource Department regarding Cobra coverage
- Update tax withholding with your employer
- Review and compare Medicare, Tricare (Military), Employer sponsored (Cobra if spouse's coverage) and open market healthcare plans (consult your insurance agent) as to which will best suit your needs going forward.
- Some States offer child/children coverage at no cost for loss of a parent

Homeowners/Auto Insurance:

- Review your homeowners, some policies have a pay-off option at spouse's death
- Review auto insurance for accidental death policy and remove spouse from coverage

Social Security:

- Apply for survivor benefits, if you are under age 60, SS phone **1-800-772-1213**
- Apply for children's benefits, if you have minor children or disabled children
- Confirm the new benefit amount if you are currently collecting Social Security income
- Apply for the \$250 death benefit under your spouse's Social Security benefits
- Contact Veteran's Administration about pension benefits (www.vba.gov)

Utilities:

- Cable/Internet provider
- Gas company
- Electric company
- Telephone company
- Cellular provider
- Water company
- Internet Sites (eBay, Amazon, Face book, Twitter, club memberships & subscriptions)

Ideas for where to keep private information:

- Floor, wall or standing Safes
- Iron Key thumb drive (pass code protected thumb drive)
- Zip lock bag in water softener, food pails or paint cans (use your imagination)
- Diversion safes (i.e. fake soda can, shampoo bottle etc...)
- Midnight gardener (remember to tell your spouse the location)
- Bank safety deposit box (this is not as safe anymore and limited access issues)
- Trustee, Attorney or CPA (only if they have a combination safe)

Other Considerations:

- Discuss final wishes of spouse immediately and let other important family members know your wishes or include them with your documents.
- Instruction list for Guardian, Trustee or children should something happen to both of you

- Make a list of family members or neighbors who could help with your children, pets or household chores if something were to happen to your spouse.
- Let your spouse, Trustee, Guardian or children know where vital information is kept or hidden, password, safe combinations, mid night gardens etc...
- Do not make drastic changes to your life style the first year if possible, it is a rollercoaster of emotions for the surviving spouse and should not be making major changes.
- Consider lasting legacy videos, letters or recordings to your surviving spouse or children