

Ontario Estate Checklist

What to do when managing an estate

Immediately After Death

- Locate the will and any related documents
- Decide if you want to act as executor (you are not required to)
- Arrange the funeral and burial/cremation
- Obtain official proof of death (usually from the funeral home)
- Secure property, valuables, pets, and any at-risk assets
- Start keeping detailed records of all actions and expenses

Within the First 30-60 Days

- Collect information on assets, debts, and income sources
- Confirm details about beneficiaries, including minors or dependents
- Consult with a lawyer familiar with estate matters
- Understand the terms of the will and who inherits what
- Arrange for valuations of major assets (property, investments, etc.)
- Notify relevant organizations (Canada Revenue Agency, Service Ontario, banks, etc.)
- Retain an accountant if needed

Probate & Legal Steps

- Determine if probate is required (many estates need this)
- Apply for probate (Certificate of Appointment of Estate Trustee) if necessary
- Open an estate bank account to manage estate funds
- Begin gathering and securing all assets

Within 6 Months of Death

- File the deceased's final tax return
- Manage debts, bills, taxes, and ongoing expenses
- Consider interim distributions to beneficiaries if appropriate
- Transfer or sell personal belongings and assets according to the will

After 12 Months (or When Ready)

- Obtain tax clearance from the CRA to confirm no taxes are owing
- Prepare a final accounting of the estate for beneficiaries
- Complete final distributions to beneficiaries
- Pay executor compensation (subject to taxes)
- Keep records of all receipts and signed releases

Note: Some estates are more complex and may require legal advice at various stages. Timelines may vary based on the size of the estate and court processing times.