

Executor responsibilities checklist

This checklist will help you keep track of the activities that often need to be completed (also available online at <https://www.bmo.com/en-ca/main/personal/estate-settlement/>).

Steps to complete

Step 1 – Make preliminary arrangements	Notes
1. Obtain the deceased person's identification and credit/debit cards.	
2. Advise the deceased's person's employer of the death, if applicable.	
3. Advise the deceased person's landlord if applicable.	
4. Locate the most recent Will, including any codicils or memoranda.	
5. Make or assist with funeral arrangements.	
6. Obtain original or certified copies of required documents (for example, death certificates).	
7. Provide the beneficiaries named in the Will with a copy of the Will or relevant sections.	
8. Meet or contact the beneficiaries to set expectations.	
9. Find out if any dependent family members have immediate financial needs.	
10. Arrange for the adoption or care of any pets.	

Steps to complete *continued*

Step 2 - Secure the assets	Notes
11. Notify banks and other financial institutions where the deceased person had accounts.	
12. Determine if the deceased person was a sole proprietor or owner/manager of a business.	
13. Determine if the deceased person was the sole or co-executor of an existing estate, or the sole or co-trustee of an existing trust.	
14. Arrange for the safe storage of personal valuables and important documents.	
15. Review insurance policies.	
16. Redirect the deceased person's mail to your address.	
17. Cancel leases, cable television services, telephone, club memberships, subscriptions, credit cards, and professional memberships.	
18. Return to the relevant authorities the deceased person's identification - Social Insurance Number (SIN) card, passport, driver's license and health card.	
19. Contact Service Canada or the Regie des rentes du Quebec to notify them of date of death - CPP/QPP/OAS.	
20. Advise an estranged or former spouse of the deceased person's death.	

Step 3 - Value the estate	Notes
21. Prepare an inventory of assets and liabilities.	
22. Determine whether authentication of the Will (probate) is required. If it is, arrange the necessary court application and payment of probate fees.	
23. Close the deceased person's bank accounts and transfer balances into the estate account.	

Steps to complete *continued*

Step 3 - Value the estate	Notes
24. Determine the estate's entitlements and liabilities if the deceased person was in a business partnership. Contact Canada Revenue Agency/Revenu Quebec if applicable (Businesses) for more information.	
25. Determine the estate's rights and responsibilities if the deceased person owned shares in a private company. Contact the company for more information.	
26. Collect life insurance benefits.	
27. Determine the original purchase price for each capital property, for tax purposes.	
28. Contact employer(s) to arrange payment of wages or pension benefits due.	
29. Check for benefits that may be available from the government.	
30. Clear and close the deceased person's safety deposit box.	
31. Transfer to the estate, or to <executor's name> as executor of the estate, the title to all real estate the deceased person owned, and notify all holders of mortgages or other encumbrances.	
32. If the deceased person held a mortgage on another person's property, advise the mortgagor to make all future payments to the estate, or to <executor's name> as executor of the estate.	
33. Determine whether there are any registered investment plans (e.g. RRIFs and/or RRSPs).	
34. Contact financial institutions and brokers; arrange to have transferred into the estate, or to <executor's name> as executor of the estate all Guaranteed Investment Certificates, investment accounts, bonds, stocks, and other investments.	

Steps to complete *continued*

Step 3 - Value the estate	Notes
35. If the deceased person was a party to any legal proceedings, or if the cause of death gives rise to any legal claim or liability, discuss the situation with your lawyer.	
36. Collect debts owing to the deceased person.	
37. If the deceased person was a beneficiary of an estate or trust not yet distributed, advise the executor(s) and/or trustee(s) of the deceased person's death and determine and collect outstanding entitlements.	
38. Decide which assets should be sold or retained.	

Step 4 - Pay debts and file tax returns	Notes
39. Place a public notice in newspapers to alert potential creditors (not applicable in Quebec).	
40. In the order provided by law, if applicable, pay balances on all credit cards, personal loans, lines of credit, utility accounts and money owing to other creditors	
41. If the deceased person was a sole proprietor of his or her own business, or owner of a corporation, ensure that all debts are paid.	
42. Prepare and file all tax returns.	
43. Obtain Tax Clearance Certificates from the CRA (and Revenu Quebec, if applicable).	

Steps to complete *continued*

Step 5 - Distribute the estate	Notes
44. Pay legacies and distribute bequests listed in the Will.	
45. Oversee the establishment of trusts provided for in the Will.	
46. Distribute real estate.	
47. Distribute vehicles.	
48. Distribute the remaining assets of the estate.	
49. Present final accounting and obtain approval from the beneficiaries.	

Be sure to keep a written record of all activities and transactions that have been completed within each of the steps.