Realty Advisors
dunlap & gorman

Timeline

	Step	Description	Timeline/Requirement	Helpful Tips	Tools
1	**Discuss End-of-Life Wishes & Legacy**	Have a candid conversation with the person who will pass away to understand their end-of-life wishes, including healthcare directives and funeral arrangements.	Before the person's death	Document their wishes and ensure they are legally valid and accessible when needed.	See "Big Questions"
2	**Seek Professional Guidance**	Encourage the person who will pass away to consult with an estate planning attorney, CPAs, Brokers, Financial Advisors and other qualified professionals to create or update their legal documents, get organized and prepared.	Before the person's death	This helps ensure their wishes are legally documented and their estate plan accurately reflects their intentions.	
3	**Understand the Role of Executor**	Thoroughly understand the responsibilities and duties of an executor. Assess your availability and ability to fulfill these duties effectively.	Before the person's death	Consult with an attorney or seek professional advice to gain a clear understanding of your obligations as an executor.	See "Questions from your executor" and "Questions to your executor"
4	**Get Organized**	Create a comprehensive document including all essential information needed after the person's death. Include details such as financial accounts, insurance policies, legal documents, and their locations.	Before the person's death	Keep the document in a secure place and inform the executor of its existence and whereabouts.	See "Account List", "Personal Profile", "Key Contacts & Documents"
5	**Meet with Family and Heirs**	Schedule a meeting with family members and heirs to discuss your role as the executor and address any potential issues or concerns.	Before the person's death	Facilitate open and honest conversations about ownership, healthcare wishes, specific bequests, and resolve conflicts in advance.	See "Big Questions" and "Specific Questions"
6	**Keep Records and Documentation**	Maintain detailed records of discussions, decisions, and agreements made with the person who will pass away, as well as subsequent updates or changes.	Before the person's death	Keep copies of legal documents, financial statements, and relevant communications as references for the executor.	See "Key Contacts & Documents"
7	**Communicate with the Executor**	Regularly communicate with the chosen executor, keeping them informed of any updates or changes to end-of-life wishes, estate plans, or other relevant matters.	Before the person's death	Maintain an open line of communication to help the executor understand their role and responsibilities. Document conversations in writing. Keep good records.	
1	**Contact Friends and Family**	Reach out to friends and family members to inform them of the deceased's passing. Ideally, have a call list in place to ensure everyone is notified.	As soon as possible after the death	Maintain open communication and provide support to loved ones during this difficult time.	See "Key Contacts & Documents"
2	**Allow Yourself to Grieve**	Take time to grieve and process your emotions. Recognize that it is a challenging time and allow yourself to go slow and act deliberately. "Go slow to go fast."	Give yourself the necessary time and space to grieve	Seek support from friends, family, or a grief counselor to navigate the emotional challenges of being an executor.	
3	**Plan Services**	Review any outlines or instructions left by the deceased regarding their wishes for funeral or memorial services. Make necessary arrangements accordingly.	Within a few days of the death	Consider involving family and close friends in the planning process to honor the deceased's wishes effectively.	See "Big Questions"
4	**Locate the Will / Notifify Estate Attorney**	Find the original will of the deceased. It is typically kept in a safe place, such as a personal safe or with an attorney.	As soon as possible after the death	If you are unable to locate the original will, consult with an attorney to determine the appropriate next steps.	See "Key Contacts & Documents"
5	**Obtain Death Certificates**	Obtain multiple certified copies of the death certificate from the appropriate government agency. The morturary will likely handle this process as well as notification of state and federal government for social security purposes .	Within a few weeks of the death	Request more copies than you think you'll need, as they may be required for various aspects of the probate process.	
6	**Petition for Probate (if needed)**	File a petition for probate with the appropriate court to officially initiate the probate process.	Typically within 30-60 days of the death	Consult with an experienced probate attorney to ensure proper filing and adherence to local probate laws and regulations.	

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7	**Notify Interested Parties**	Notify beneficiaries, heirs, and other interested parties named in the will about the probate proceedings. The is typically a 120 waiting period once all parties have been notified.	Within a few weeks of filing the petition for probate	Maintain clear and transparent communication with all interested parties to keep them informed throughout the probate process. Document all conversations in writing.	See example letter below.
8	**Gather and Inventory Assets**	Identify, locate, and compile a detailed inventory of the deceased's assets, including financial accounts, real estate, and personal property.	Within the first few months of the probate process	Document all assets thoroughly, including their estimated values and any relevant supporting documentation.	See "Account List"
9	**Appraise Assets**	Obtain professional appraisals for valuable assets, such as real estate, antiques, or collectibles.	As soon as possible after gathering the assets	Seek reputable appraisers who specialize in the relevant asset types to ensure accurate valuation.	
10	**Pay Debts and Taxes**	Identify and notify creditors, settle outstanding debts, and file any necessary tax returns for the deceased.	Within the first year of the probate process. 9 months after death to file taxes.	Keep meticulous records of all debts paid and taxes filed to maintain proper documentation for the probate court.	
11	**Distribute Assets**	After settling debts and taxes, distribute the remaining assets to the beneficiaries according to the terms of the will.	Once all legal obligations are fulfilled	Follow the instructions in the will precisely	