

Reference Guide: What to Do After Someone Passes

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Within the first few days

Completed Date	Completed By	Task
		Secure the residence, including: clean out the refrigerator, care for pets and plants.
		Locate documents for prearranged funeral services and burial plots.
		Assign someone to watch the home of the decedent: keep doors and vehicles locked, have mail brought in, notify neighbors and/or police.
		Gather mail and go through carefully.

Notifications to send over the next few weeks (some may require a death certificate)

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		If employed, notify employer and ask about benefits or life insurance.
		Contact the military if decedent was a veteran to determine if there are any benefits or survivor's benefits available. Go to www.va.gov .
		Contact Social Security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put the decedent's social security number on a Master Death Index to avoid fraud. Go to www.ssa.gov. Check on survivor spouse lump sum payment of \$255. Call 1-800-772-1213.
		Cancel decedent's driver's license to protect against identity theft.
		Notify local election board to protect against voter fraud.
		Contact credit card companies, cancel and destroy cards, obtain last credit card statement.
		Contact life insurance companies and determine beneficiaries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If unsure of life insurance look for clues by reviewing bank statements, email accounts and safe deposit boxes
		If decedent had federal student loans they will be discharged, visit https://studentaid.gov/
		Contact utility companies to change names or cancel accounts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Phone/Cell Phone: Tip – save contacts for future reference Utilities including; Internet, gas & electric, water: Tip - update accounts for houses that need services before sold and don't forget the need for internet with security systems. Cable/dish and streaming services.

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		Complete a change-of-address form with the post office so future mail will go to the decedent's administrator.
		Complete a change-of-address form with the IRS to receive the decedent's IRS correspondence, Form 8822 www.irs.gov .
		Sign up for the Deceased Do Not Call list to stop marketing mail at https://www.ims-dm.com/cgi/ddnc.php

Secure, gather, and protect assets over the next few months

Completed Date	Completed By	Task
		Request and gather important documents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Original will and/or trust 2.) Death certificate (you will need several copies of this) 3.) Marriage, divorce and birth certificates 4.) Property and vehicle titles 5.) Identification: Passport, Driver's license
		If decedent had a pension – contact payor to notify of death and investigate if there are death benefits.
		Gather all financial records: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Bank and savings account statements 2.) Checkbook, check register, and statements 3.) Investment and stock holdings 4.) IRA, 401(K) and annuity account statements. 5.) Pension account statements. <p>Determine titling on all accounts. Determine designated beneficiaries on retirement holdings. Close or freeze these accounts if not needed to pay expenses.</p>
		Shred, don't just throw away, personal documents to guard against fraud. Make sure to save any recent statements before shredding.
		Gather all user names and passwords for digital assets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Email accounts 2.) Online bank and investment accounts 3.) Social media accounts (Facebook, X, etc.) 4.) Reward programs 5.) Digital photo or music accounts
		Determine if decedent held assets in cryptocurrency, and if you have access to the "private key" in order to transfer the asset.

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		Determine if there is a safe deposit box, gain access, and take inventory of the contents.
		Obtain copies of any mortgage statements and notify the mortgage company. Continue to make mortgage payments until house is sold. If a renter, notify landlord and inquire about lease obligations.
		Notify vehicle lenders. Continue to make payments until vehicle is sold.
		Try to obtain as many years as possible of prior tax returns (at least two). Including individual income tax form 1040 and/or any gift tax form 709 filings.
		Cancel other accounts/subscriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. • Physical subscriptions, magazines, newspapers
		Some airlines and hotels will transfer or donate unused miles and points. Look for clues in emails.
		After notifying social security, notify credit reporting agencies. You will only need to report to one agency and they will notify the others.

Managing the estate

Completed Date	Completed By	Task
		Apply for a tax EIN# for the estate if required. Can be done FREE online at www.irs.gov (this can also be done by an accountant or lawyer).
		Once the EIN is obtained, open an estate bank account to handle the estate's income and expenses.
		Make sure all utilities, vehicle, and mortgage payments are being paid in a timely manner.
		Contact a lawyer to get a letter of administration/testamentary or begin the probate process.
		Prepare a list of assets and the approximate value on the date of death. Remember there is a step up basis for capital assets. For large estates, contact a tax professional to assist with this process.
		Cancel memberships, insurance, health insurance, and other accounts to stop recurring charges.
		Be careful to not give out too much information on social media accounts or in the obituary. Monitor or close social media accounts. Check the decedent's credit report for accounts opened in decedent's name.

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		Go to www.missingmoney.com and conduct a free search for any unclaimed property that belongs to the decedent. Do this for 10 years following death.
		Keep detailed records of income and expenses to assist the accountant and lawyer with the preparation of estate documents and tax returns.
		Determine what assets will be sold or distributed to the beneficiaries. Contact the necessary professionals to assist with these sales. Do not sell any securities or other assets on the date of death. Take time to think through these arrangements.

Tax Deadlines: Forms that may be required

Name	Due Date	Extension
Final 1040	4/15 following year of death: will include income from January 1 – date of death.	6 months (due date 10/15)
Form 706	9 months following death (payment also due). Filing is required if the gross estate is greater than \$13.6M for 2024 and \$13.99M for 2025. The 2026 amount is unknown and could go as low as \$7M.	6 months
Form M706 (for MN residents)	9 months following death (payment also due). Filing is required if the gross estate is greater than \$3M.	6 months
Form 1041	3.5 months (15 th day of the 4 th month) after determining the return month end date. Administrator determines the year end date. Year end date can be calendar year end or fiscal year end. Fiscal year end begins on the date of death and ends on the last day of the month prior to the one year death anniversary.	5.5 months

Directory

Cynthia McLagan, EA
Director
cmclagan@jakcpa.com
651-379-5749

Jonathon Lansink, CPA, CFP®, RSSA®
Tax Manager
jlansink@jakcpa.com
651-379-5743

Victor Gliva, MBA
Staff Accountant
vgliva@jakcpa.com
651-379-5768