

Estate Plan

CHECKLIST



Having an up-to-date estate plan is simply smart.

Many Canadians avoid preparing an estate plan for various reasons, including general uncertainty and the discomfort of anything associated with dying. The death of a spouse ranks number 1 on the respected Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory, while the death of a close family member is number 5.

Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory*

LIFE EVENT	SCORE
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Detention in jail or other institution	63
Death of close family member	63
Major personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Being fired at work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement from work	45
Major health change or behaviour of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gaining a new family member (birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc.)	39
Major business adjustment	39
Major change in financial state (much worse or better than usual)	38
Death of a close friend	37
Career change by choice	36
Spousal argument frequency change (much worse or better than usual)	35
Taking on a mortgage for home or business	31
Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
Major change in work responsibilities (promotion or demotion)	29

*Abbreviated for brevity; request a full version from your financial advisor to calculate your score. Reprinted from: Journal of Psychosomatic Research, Volume 11, Issue 2, Thomas H. Holmes & Richard H. Rahe, The Social Readjustment Rating Scale, 213-218, Copyright (2018), with permission from Elsevier.

It all begins with a will.

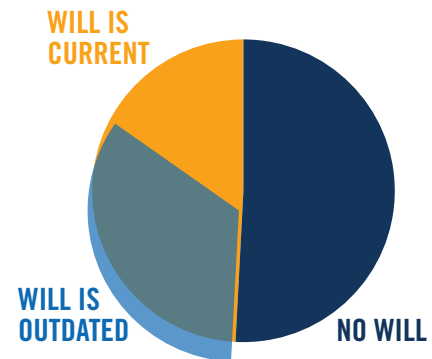
If you haven't drafted a will, you're not alone. An online survey conducted by the Angus Reid Institute in January 2018 found that just over half of Canadians of all ages (51%) do not have a will. Of those who do, about one-third (35%) say it is current.

Why don't Canadians have a will? The reasons cited:

- Too young to worry about it (25%).
- No assets to worry about (23%).
- Too expensive (18%).
- Don't want to think about dying (8%)
 - twice as many men say this as women.
- Too time-consuming (5%).

But if you pass away “intestate” (without a will), it can harm the financial well-being of your intended heirs*. So start your estate plan by having a will drafted and keep it up to date.

While everyone's situation will differ, there are some common elements to estate planning. Your situation may require additional first steps. If so, note them in “Other Matters to Discuss With Your Advisor.”



What 'will' happen with your assets? Half of Canadian adults say they don't have a last will and testament, Angus Reid Institute, January 23, 2018.



With a complete picture of your holdings, your Advisor can better guide you so the maximum value of your estate can be preserved for, and transferred to, your heirs and the impact of probate can be minimized.**

* In Québec: Successor.

** Probate is the first stage in the legal process of administering an estate; it includes reviewing and validating the will and appointing the executor.



Your estate plan should include a complete inventory of all financial and investment assets. A beneficiary should always be designated for each investment/financial account. Consult with your lawyer and financial advisor about whether the beneficiary should be “your estate” or your named heirs.

If you own a business, it should have its own succession plan to ensure proper transfer of ownership and leadership. Your advisor may also be able to help or could recommend someone who can.

Estate law is governed by the provinces and territories. In at least one province (Ontario), a complete account of all assets held by the estate must be filed within 90 days of the executor officially assuming his/her duties. Wherever you live, you will help your executor by capturing this information in detail.

Key Documents Your Executor & Heirs Will Need

- Valid and current will that properly reflects your intentions for your estate
- List of all key contacts: financial advisor, lawyer, accountant, etc. with phone number, email, etc.
- Inventory of all key estate-related documents for use by your executor
- Valid codicil that identifies material changes to your will after it was prepared (if this was prepared)
- Powers of Attorney: ordinary and enduring
- Personal property deed(s), leases, rental agreements (including second properties, e.g., cottage)
- Documents confirming the details of a pre-paid funeral, cemetery arrangements, cremation, etc.
- Previous tax return (for past year and for previous years)
- Business registration, ownership and management documents
- Prenuptial/postnuptial agreement(s) that affect estate obligations/administration
- Key identification documents: social insurance number (SIN), health card, driver's licence, etc.
- Access information for secured assets including digital/online assets (financial and non-financial)
- All financial plan and account signup documents (if available) and most recent statement
- Trust set-up and admin. documents, e.g., spousal trust, Henson Trust, inter vivos, testamentary
- Insurance policy/policies: life, property, auto, business
- Loyalty program membership information
- Pre-paid service contracts (e.g., gym membership)
- Other documents related to or that attest to a financial interest or obligation

Estate Planning: Initial Priorities

- Family meeting held with/without your advisor to discuss estate matters, inheritances, etc.?
- Power of Attorney[†] prepared to provide financial support if you are incapacitated or need help?
- Current and valid will? Any codicil? Is the will holographic or drawn up by a lawyer[‡]?
- Executor[§] designated and can perform duties when needed and over period of appointment?
- Funeral: Executor and family members aware of preferences and any pre-existing arrangements?
- Key contact list (lawyer, etc.) prepared and provided to executor and family members?
- Executor provided with checklist (available from your advisor) to guide short- and long-term duties?

Financial Asset & Property Inventory

- Personal chequing and savings accounts
- Registered plan/accounts: RRSP, Spousal RRSP, Group RRSP, RESP, TFSA, etc.
- Open investment accounts
- Employer-sponsored defined-benefit (DB) pension plans
- CPP/QPP Credits (including the CPP/QPP death benefit)
- Canadian Armed Forces veterans death benefit and other benefits
- Life insurance policy/policies general and/or to cover taxes owing on the estate
- Individually held investments (e.g., term deposits, GICs, country bonds, shares, etc.)
- Inheritances bequeathed and owing from others' estates
- Trusts that were set up for you/that you set up for others
- Business(es) that you own and/or have an ownership stake in
- Real property (owned, leased, rented)
- Collectibles and other property of significant value (coins, stamps, art, memorabilia, etc.)
- Identification of assets/property held in other jurisdictions in Canada or internationally
- Mortgages and loans (made for investment purposes)
- Pending financial obligations owed to you: alimony, lawsuit settlement, insurance payout
- Loyalty program points (statements)
- Traveller's cheques, cash on hand and other cash equivalents

[†] In Québec: Protection Mandate. [‡] A holographic will is not accepted in some provinces.

[§] Also known as estate representative or estate trustee, or as liquidator in Québec.

Key Administrative Matters

- If you married/remarried since a previous will was drawn, has your will been updated?^{††}
- If you married/remarried, was the named beneficiary on all plans, accounts and policies updated?
- Is your designated executor valid and is that person willing to serve in this capacity?
- Your legal and financial support team: Does your executor know whom to contact and how?
- Has authorization been granted to your accountant to represent your interests to the CRA?
- Financial and administrative records: Can documents be retrieved when needed?
- Has a safety deposit box contents inventory been prepared and will the box be accessible?
- Are there major outstanding debts owed (e.g., mortgage, other loans) that should be provided for?
- Are there short-term income needs of heirs that should be provided for?
- Are your assets subject to contractual obligations, spousal and/or dependants' rights?

Special Circumstances & Considerations

- Are there known/anticipated disputes among the intended heirs that could affect the estate?
- Are there religious/Canadian legal obligations that would affect the estate and/or its transfer?^{‡‡}
- Are there any considerations related to blended/second families that would affect the estate?
- Do you hold dual citizenship that creates financial/administrative obligations in another jurisdiction?
- Are there legal actions intended/underway today that could affect the estate?
- Have arrangements been made to have a guardian^{§§} appointed for your minor children?
- Are you the primary caregiver for another person whose financial needs you manage/provide for?
- Do you have pets or animals in your care whose well-being you need/want to provide for?
- Is your property (home) subject to a reverse mortgage?
- Do you have specific direction you wish to give for your digital/online financial/non-financial assets?
- Have legacy promises been made to specific charitable/non-profit organizations?
- Do you have special needs children whose well-being must be looked after (e.g., via a Henson Trust)?
- Do you own other financial assets and/or property of financial worth in another jurisdiction that should be considered in your estate planning?
- Do you want your beneficiaries to receive assets while you are alive, at the time of your passing or at some future date based on other considerations?
- Have you sent a “letter of wishes” expressing your desire to bequeath property without formalizing that intent in your will?
- Will the date of death be known because it is planned under assisted dying legislation?

^{††} In some provinces and territories, getting married, living common-law or getting divorced or separated can cancel any previous wills you have made.

^{‡‡} Wills may be subject to religious law or Canadian law, e.g., the Indian Act. [Estate planning for diverse communities](#), Advisor.ca, Jan. 27, 2017.

^{§§} Tutor in Québec.



Have the assurance
your wishes and legacy
goals will be fulfilled

Please note anything else you want to talk about with your advisor. These should relate to your advisor's expertise but could also include asking about other service providers your advisor may know, e.g., a lawyer, accountant, real estate agent, etc.

Other Matters to Discuss With Your Advisor

Helpful resources:

You may find these resources helpful for supplementing the information and advice your financial advisor provides you.

- [Estate planning, wills and dealing with death](#) – Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC)
- [Provincial and territorial resources on estate law](#) – Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC)
- [Making a will and planning your estate](#) – Government of Canada
- [What to do when someone has died](#) – Government of Canada



Bridgehouse Asset Managers | www.bridgehousecanada.com
33 Yonge Street | Suite 300 | Toronto | ON | M5E 1G4 | 416.306.5700 | 888.861.9998

For informational purposes only. Bridgehouse Asset Managers® is a trade name of Brandes Investment Partners & Co. (Bridgehouse). Brandes Investment Partners® is a registered trademark of Brandes Investment Partners, L.P., which is an affiliate of Bridgehouse. Bridgehouse has taken reasonable steps to ensure accurate and current information at the time of posting. The information has been gathered from sources believed to be reliable; however, Bridgehouse is not responsible for any errors or omissions contained herein. This material is not intended to provide legal, financial or other advice, and may not reflect the thoughts and opinions of Bridgehouse. Information provided is not a substitute for professional advice. July 2018. FOR DISTRIBUTION TO INVESTORS BY REGISTERED DEALERS ONLY.