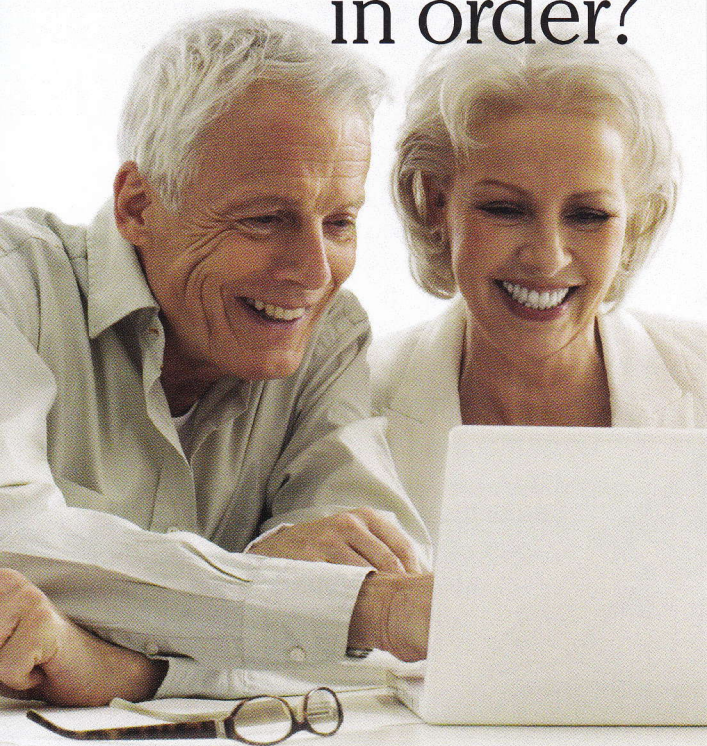




Is your **ESTATE**
in order?



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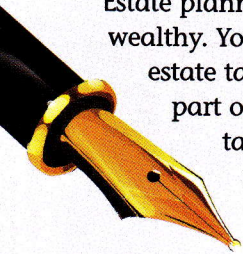
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The value of good estate planning

When you've worked all your life to accumulate assets for the benefit of yourself and your family, you don't want "unintended heirs" such as the tax collector to benefit financially at the expense of your intended heirs.

An estate plan can help assure your family of financial security after your death. It can cut taxes, administrative costs, and red tape. It allows you to dispose of assets as you wish, with consideration given to your heirs' individual needs and desires.



Estate planning isn't just for the wealthy. You may be aware of the estate tax exclusion, which shields part of your wealth from estate taxes, and the exclusion may seem very large. Yet, when you consider the value of retirement benefits, life insurance, your home, and other assets, you may be surprised at how much you're worth.

Where to begin

Complete the worksheet at right to begin your own estate plan. List your assets, along with estimated value, and indicate how the title is held. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Bring this worksheet – in any stage of completion – to our office, and let us give you an estimate of the estate taxes that would be due. We can also review with you the planning techniques that are most appropriate in your particular situation.

Estate of _____

SHOW O

ASSETS

Estimated
Value, Total

=

Community
Property

Cash & cash equivalents

\$

\$

Stocks, bonds, mutual funds

Real estate

Business interests

Retirement plans

Personal property

Life insurance proceeds

Other assets

TOTAL ASSETS

\$

\$

LIABILITIES

Mortgages

\$

\$

Loans and notes

Credit card debt

Other

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$

\$

NET ESTATE
(assets minus liabilities)

\$

\$

Date _____

OWNERSHIP BY \$ AMOUNT

+

Joint
Property

+

Husband's
Separate

+

Wife's
Separate

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

\$

Key documents for every estate plan

Basic estate planning documents allow you to control the fundamental financial and personal decisions of your life and death. Here's a list of the essentials.



The will

Where there's a will, there's a way – a way to honor your wishes. How, when, and to whom will your property go? Who will be the guardians of your minor children? Without a will, these decisions will be made by strangers in a court system using rules that could be contrary to your intentions.

Keep in mind that a will controls only the distribution of your probate estate. It does not control assets held in trust, certain joint assets, retirement accounts, or life insurance policies on which you name beneficiaries.



Financial inventory

Keep a list of your insurance policies, bank accounts, investment and retirement accounts, businesses you own, outstanding debt, credit cards, tax-related documents, income sources, and other financial information, including password information for online accounts. In addition, include the names and phone numbers of your accountant, lawyer, doctor, and insurance agent.

The worksheet in this brochure will get you started in preparing a financial inventory.



Power of attorney

A power of attorney names another individual as your agent. If you were to become disabled or seriously ill, a power of attorney

allows your agent to pay your bills, deposit your checks, and make decisions on your behalf.



Health care directive

A health care directive (also called a living will, directive to physicians, or some similar name) documents the medical treatment you wish if you become incapacitated. It lets you name the individual(s) you wish to make your medical decisions if circumstances keep you from making them yourself.



Funeral instructions

Include your burial wishes and a list of relatives, friends, and business associates to be notified upon your death.

Keep your plan current

Proper documentation is vital for effective estate planning. Without it, your assets may go to unintended recipients, access to financial resources will be delayed, and critical decisions related to your medical treatment may divide your family. Take control of these important decisions by including the proper documents in your estate plan.

Keep your original documents in a fire-proof safe or with your attorney. Put your list of documents and the copies in a binder at home, and tell your personal representative (executor) where the binder is located.

Estate planning is an ongoing project. Review your plan and documents on a regular basis to ensure that they are up to date for current tax law and your personal situation.

We would be happy to assist you and your attorney with your estate planning.