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ESTATE ADMINISTRATION CHECKLIST

THINGS TO DO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

- □ Notify immediate family and close friends
- □ Arrange for donation of bodily organs, if applicable
- □ Determine whether the decedent had specific funeral or burial wishes and plan services accordingly
- □ Prepare obituary and arrange for publication
- □ Evaluate need for care of dependents or pets, if any. Ensure safety of all
- □ Secure property (real and personal)
- □ Arrange for post office to hold mail
- □ Keep records of all payments you make for funeral and other expenses
- □ Obtain death certificates (usually the funeral home can assist with this, and make sure all the information in the death certificate is correct)
- □ Locate original Will (and Trust, if any); DO NOT REMOVE STAPLES
- □ Obtain names, addresses, and contact information for all estate beneficiaries/heirs-at-law (those that would take under intestacy law if there was no Will)
- □ Locate important documents, deeds, financial statements, and life insurance policies, as applicable
- □ Advise Social Security, pensions, employers, and other institutions as necessary
- □ Cancel credit cards and any recurring charges/services
- □ Report death to credit reporting agencies
- □ Retain Estate attorney to assist with probate/administration process, if necessary

PROBATE & ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATE

- □ Probate Will or if no Will, become Administrator in the Surrogate’s Court in the County where the decedent resided
- □ Receive Letters Testamentary/Letters of Administration
- □ Provide Notice of Probate to heirs-at-law
- □ Obtain a taxpayer identification number (“EIN”) from the IRS
- □ Open an Estate Checking Account and transfer decedent’s funds into the Estate Checking Account
- □ Identify all of the assets of the decedent
- □ Prepare an inventory of the decedent’s assets (probate and non-probate) and obtain valuations of assets, as appropriate
- □ Marshall all assets into the Estate account
- □ Prepare an inventory of the decedent’s debts
- □ The decedent's debts should not be paid until assets are marshalled and it is determined that there are sufficient funds to pay all debts

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TAXATION, DISTRIBUTION AND FINALIZATION OF ESTATE ADMINISTRATION

- □ Determine whether an estate and/or inheritance tax return is necessary
- □ Retain accountant to prepare final personal income tax return and estate income tax return, if necessary
- □ Determine whether executor commissions (and/or trustee commissions) will be taken
- □ Determine if an accounting is necessary and, if so, prepare one
- □ When ready to make distributions to beneficiaries, prepare Refunding Bonds and Releases and/or Agreement Settling Account for each beneficiary to sign prior to the distributions being made
- □ Run child support search (as may be required per State law)
- □ Ensure that time has passed for creditors to make a claim against the Estate
- □ Distribute estate assets

Please note that this list is not inclusive of all tasks that may be necessary in a particular estate. If you are administering an estate and would like the assistance of a seasoned professional, please contact the Trusts and Estates attorneys at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, P.C. for support throughout each step of the process.

Joseph L. Goldman
Co-Chair, Trusts & Estates
jgoldman@pashmanstein.com
201.488.8200

Naomi Becker Collier
Co-Chair, Trusts & Estates
ncollier@pashmanstein.com
201.639.2011