

Should-dos

Okay, you've gotten through the urgent stuff--you're past the funeral, and you've gathered important documents. Now it's time to change the ownership information for your banking, insurance, bills, and so forth. Start with the basics, the things that affect you day-to-day, and work your way to the less urgent but still important things.

Notify of name changes:

- Banks, credit unions & other financial institutions
- Retirement plans
- Mortgage company or Landlord (if renting)
- Credit card companies
- Loans for car, boat, RV or other vehicles
- Insurance for home, vehicles, life, health care
- Any vendors or services that you use on a regular basis

Consider updating and/or changing YOUR beneficiaries:

- Banks, credit unions & other financial institutions
- Wills and Powers of Attorney and/or Medical Directives
- Retirement plans or life insurance policies

Update (or become familiar with) your digital or mobile life:

- If your desktop computer, tablet or phone is locked and needs a password to open, determine this and store the info in a safe place
- Find your logins and passwords for sites or apps you use regularly and store them in a safe place (this is separate from opening a device)
- Update the profile for each site you use, especially any contact email addresses or phone numbers
- Cancel any memberships you no longer want
- Check to see if you are currently using bill pay from any of these sites, and decide if you want to continue
- Decide how you want to receive any statements--via mail or electronically
- Decide how long you want to keep your loved one's email address and phone number. You can usually forward these to yourself for a period of time before canceling so you don't miss anything.

Familiarize yourself with your new financial situation:

- It's likely that your monthly income has changed. You might want to make a list of all money coming in and all money going out on a monthly basis
- Track your expenses, and decide what could be reduced or eliminated if you had to conserve funds
- Shop for the best deal on anything you can: cable TV, household services, etc.
- If you have a mortgage, consider whether you are better off continuing the payments as they are, refinancing your home to lower payments, or paying it off with insurance proceeds or available funds
- Determine if you want or need to sell a car, boat, RV, motorcycle or golf cart
- Be cautious about opening new accounts or applying for new credit cards

Tips:

- Banks usually recommend leaving your spouse's name on the bank account for at least one year. Should you receive proceeds for the "Estate of ..." you will be able to deposit and access these. You can have your checks printed without the spouse's name if you wish.
- Review your monthly bank statement to see which bills are automatically deducted from your account or which are set up on recurring bill pay
- Review your monthly credit card statement to see recurring monthly charges

Auto Debit refers to a regular payment from your bank account that is generated by the vendor (such as a utility company) and is set up from their end. **Bill Pay** (or Zelle, Venmo, etc.) is generated by you to pay recurring bills from your bank account on a schedule that you set up and control. **Recurring charges** on a credit card indicate you have provided your credit card number to a vendor for regular charges. Any of these can be canceled or changed; the method depends on how the payment was initially set up.

*Being one doesn't have to mean being alone.
Let's help each other.*