

An Executor's First Steps — Checklist

THE FIRST WEEK

- ☐ **Locate the original Will** — solicitor's safe custody, NSW Trustee, home papers; check funeral wishes
- ☐ **Arrange the funeral** — the executor has authority; reasonable costs come from the estate
- ☐ **Register the death & order death certificates** — usually via the funeral director; order several certified copies
- ☐ **Secure the assets** — lock the home, keep insurance current, secure vehicles, valuables & mail

THE FIRST MONTH

- ☐ **Notify institutions** — banks, super funds, Centrelink, Medicare, utilities, insurers
- ☐ **Build a list of assets & liabilities** — accounts, property, shares, super, vehicles, debts owed and owing
- ☐ **Find out if probate is even needed** — joint assets & small balances often pass without a grant
- ☐ **If a grant is needed, start early** — publish the online Probate Notice; application can be filed 14 days later

ADMINISTERING THE ESTATE

- ☐ **Obtain the grant of probate** — file the application; routine grants are currently assessed in a few weeks
- ☐ **Collect the assets** — close accounts, transfer or sell property and shares, claim life insurance
- ☐ **Pay the debts** — funeral, taxes, mortgage and other liabilities in the correct order
- ☐ **Deal with tax** — lodge the deceased's final tax return (and estate returns if required)
- ☐ **Keep clear accounts** — beneficiaries are entitled to transparency on every dollar

BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE — THE PROTECTION RULES

- ☐ **Publish notice** — publish a notice of intended distribution on the NSW Online Registry
- ☐ **Observe the waiting periods** — wait 30+ days after the notice AND 6+ months from the date of death
- ☐ **Consider claim risk before paying out** — family provision claims can be made within 12 months of death
- ☐ **When in doubt, ask first** — obtain advice before distributing; executors can be personally liable

Named as an executor? Your first consultation is free.

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