



Do You Have a Will?

Making a Will

Making a Will is a good idea. It can help reduce the confusion and uncertainty that death sometimes brings and provides reassurance to your family.

A Will:

- Allows the person you name as your executor to act immediately - to make funeral arrangements and take charge of your estate
- Protects your worldly possessions and ensures they are dealt with as you have directed
- Affords the opportunity to make suitable arrangements for minor children, other dependants and pets
- Clarifies for family and friends what your wishes are and who is to carry them out
- Minimizes the costs of dealing with your estate and the effort involved in managing it.

Making a Will does not need to be complicated or expensive. Lawyers and notaries public prepare Wills, though there are some restrictions on the types of Wills that notaries can make. Self-help Will kits are available in stores, but mistakes are easy to make and you are taking a risk that a Will prepared without professional advice will not do what you want. Will making is an area where professional advice is well worth the cost.

In BC, a Will must be witnessed by two people who must both be present at the same time you sign your Will. A gift made in a Will to someone who acts as witness (or to their spouse) is invalid. A handwritten Will, not witnessed, is not usually valid in BC.

If you already have a Will

If you already have a Will, you should review it every few years to make sure that it is current – for example, your executor may have moved away or for another reason may no longer be able to manage your estate, or if you marry after the date of your Will, you will need to make a new Will. If your Will is not up-to-date you should see a lawyer or notary about making a new Will. *You cannot update your Will just by writing changes on it.*

Choosing Your Executor

Choosing your executor is important. Most people choose their spouse, an adult child or trusted friend. Some people choose a professional such as a lawyer or trust company. Alternatively, the Public Guardian and Trustee may agree to be your executor. Whatever you do, always make sure the person you wish to appoint as executor is willing to act.

Once you have made a Will, tell your executor where you keep your Will and other important documents. You should also discuss the kind of funeral you want to have with your executor and family. Make a family tree as this may be needed later, and list the current addresses and phone numbers of your beneficiaries.

Finally, if your notary or lawyer has not already done this, you should register your Will with the Ministry of Health Vital Statistics Agency. The Agency does not keep a copy of the Will, only the date on which it was made and its location. This alerts others that you have made a Will after you are gone.

Additional information about the Estate and Personal Trust Services offered by the Public Guardian and Trustee can be found on our website – www.trustee.bc.ca. Specific information about administration fees is provided under the heading “Legislation and Fees”.

If you wish to discuss whether it would be appropriate to name the Public Guardian and Trustee as your executor, **please call 604.660.4444 and ask to speak to an Estate Administrator**, or email us at estates@trustee.bc.ca. The Public Guardian and Trustee can also be reached through Service BC:

Vancouver: (604) 660-2421
Victoria: (250) 387-6121
Other areas of BC: 1(800) 663-7867



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PUBLIC GUARDIAN
AND TRUSTEE OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA