

Contact the Public Guardian and Trustee

Estate and Personal Trust Services
Public Guardian and Trustee
700-808 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3L3

PHONE **604 660 4444**
EMAIL **estates@trustee.bc.ca**
WEBSITE **www.trustee.bc.ca**

Toll free calling is available through Service BC. After dialling the appropriate number for your area (below), request to be transferred to the PGT (regular office hours 8:30am-4:30pm, Mon-Fri).

VANCOUVER **604 660 2421**
VICTORIA **250 387 6121**
ELSEWHERE **800 663 7867**

Do You Have a Will?

Making a Will

Making a will is a good idea. In BC, a person 16 years or older can make a will. 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 control of your estate
- Protects your possessions and ensures they are dealt with as you have directed
- Provides 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 and efforts involved in administering your estate

Making a will does not need to be complicated or expensive. Lawyers and notaries prepare wills, although there are some restrictions on the types of wills that notaries can make. Self help will kits are available, but you may still want to get professional advice to ensure your will clearly indicates your wishes, including appointing a guardian for any minor children you may have. Wills are an area where professional advice is well worth the cost.

Guardians of children under the age of 19 should take care to appoint a guardian of their children in their wills in the event there is no surviving parent with custody of the children. Guardians should ensure that the named guardian is willing to take on this important responsibility. Guardians should also consider the costs of caring for the children.

In BC, a valid will must be in writing, signed at its end by the will maker, in the presence of two or more witnesses who also sign the will. Please refer to the *Wills, Estates and Succession Act* for further information regarding wills and testamentary documents.

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 life circumstances may have changed or your executor may have moved away or for another reason may no longer be able to manage your estate. If your will is not up to date you should see a lawyer or notary about making a new will.

Choosing Your Executor

Choosing your executor is important. Most people choose their spouse, an adult child, parent, guardian or trusted friend. Some people choose a professional such as a lawyer or trust company. Alternatively, the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) 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 with your executor and family the kind of funeral you want to have. 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 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.

Additional information about the Estate and Personal Trust Services (EPTS) offered by the PGT can be found on our website: www.trustee.bc.ca. Specific information about administration fees is provided under the heading "Fees charged by the PGT".

If you wish to discuss whether it would be appropriate to name the PGT as your executor, please call 604.660.4444 and ask to speak to the Quality Assurance Manager in EPTS, or email us at estates@trustee.bc.ca.

This information is provided as a public service by the Public Guardian and Trustee. The Public Guardian and Trustee does not provide legal advice.