

Financial Resources for END OF LIFE

Financial Resources



There may be resources to help us with the expenses of taking care of our departed. Often these resources are never tapped into but could have helped with the costs taken on by the surviving family or friends. We need to “look under every stone” to ensure that we have found all of these financial tools. They may help with burial costs or we may discover that there is even an ongoing income for the survivor. It is important to keep in mind that the deceased’s income will stop and there may be a period of no income or no lump sums available for several months. Also, contrary to the threats of creditors and collectors, debts are the responsibility of the deceased and/or co-signer and **not** the responsibility of family, friends or other survivors.

Financial Matters Before Departure

As much as a prolonged illness is agonizing for everyone, it does grant us the opportunity to do advance planning. Simple preparation can ease the way for everyone involved...and save a lot of money. Many people believe that a lawyer is always necessary. This is not so. If the deceased has no assets or dependents or there would be no dispute over any assets that do remain, then a lawyer may not be necessary. We can access the Lawyer Referral Line for a free half hour consultation at www.lsuc.on.ca or 1-800-268-8326. Here are some of the most important matters to discuss with the ill loved one:

Named Beneficiaries. Whenever and wherever possible, never name a beneficiary as “Estate”. This will necessitate a lawyer. Simple Estate Planning involves the matching of specific people to specific assets. For example – Our Work Life Insurance Policy can go directly to our spouse and the other Personal Life Insurance Policy can go directly to our children and our RRSP’s can go to our siblings. Most financial assets ask for a Beneficiary name. Even if we have 6 children or 6 siblings, name them specifically.

Doing this means that our Executor doesn't get involved at all and even more importantly, most directly named cash assets pay out within a couple of months – if not sooner.

Make a Will. A Will is simply a legal document that carries out the wishes of the deceased. As we pass, most of us feel comfort in knowing that the ones we leave behind will be taken care of and that our life long possessions will be inherited by those who will want them and appreciate these - our last gifts. A Will is legal as long as it is witnessed by two people who are NOT named in it. A Will needs to be considered if there are real assets to be distributed, there is an expected dispute or the deceased has particular wishes on how to proceed with funeral etc.

Assign a Power of Attorney. The P. of A. is the person that takes care of the ill person before death – separately over personal care and property. Often the hospitals, banks or nursing homes will supply their own forms. The rights and obligations of the P. of A. cease at the time of death. The P. of A. is not responsible for the deceased's debt.

Pre-signed Cheques. Although this action sounds precarious, getting a number of pre-signed cheques by the unwell will make normal bill paying easy. This should only be done by the P. of A. Keep in mind banks *may not* cash any cheques after the date of death.

Get another name on Bank Accounts: Keep the deceased person's bank account open in order to receive any funds which are enroute. Usually the person who is named as P. of A. can become a joint owner of the bank accounts. The main receipt is the CPP lump sum death benefit.

Debt - Consider Changing Banks: If the ill person is financially stricken and/or debt ridden, it may be prudent to have a new bank account opened in a bank other than the one that they owe. Banks can garnish any funds (other than Ontario Works and ODSP) in a bank account to pay an internal debt. This can cause all kinds of havoc to normal prioritized bill payment.

Assign an Executor. The Executor takes over where the P. of A. left off - taking control of the matters of the deceased.

The Executor named in the will manages everything from the funeral, housing, bank accounts and distribution of assets.

LUMP SUM and BENEFITS For Death Expenses



Canada Pension Plan Death Benefit (CPP) provides a one-time payment which is based on the contributions of the deceased. The maximum is **\$ 2,500.00** and must be applied for within 60 days. Where possible, it may be wise to “sign over” the CPP lump sum death benefit to the Funeral Home/Cremation Service for easier and assured payment. www.canada.ca – search “death benefit” **or** 1-800-277-9914 or contact your MP’s office.

Motor Vehicle Insurance: If the death is accidental and related to a motor vehicle accident there could be additional sources of funds from the deceased’s car insurance company.

Employer Benefits or Group Benefit Package: Many employers have Life Insurance programs for their staff. A discussion with the employer about life insurance is suggested at the time of reporting the death. The staff may even help by making direct donations. Often coverage for the surviving family could continue for another year or more.

Private Insurance Policies: Many insurance policies are never collected! Research all papers. Check into bank statements of the deceased to see if there are any automatic withdrawals for insurance coverage.

Associations, (CAA) Clubs, Legions, Lodges and Unions: Some organizations have Life Insurance plans for their members. A discussion with that club about life insurance is suggested at the time of reporting the death. They may even help by donation with some of the costs.

Debt Insurance: Many people have Mortgage, Loan or Credit Card Insurance. This may pay off that particular debt and leave any security (home or vehicles) free and clear for the estate or survivors. Check any Credit Card and Bank Statements for monthly Insurance charges.

Indigent Funerals: An Indigent person is one who has no financial means for funeral coverage. Based on low income criteria (Ontario Works and ODSP), there may be benefits available to help with the funeral expenses. Application must be made to Social Services Program Administrator prior to the funeral being arranged.

**www.grey.ca/health-social-services or
www.brucecounty.on.ca/services-health**

Veterans: The Last Post Fund may offer financial assistance for the funeral based on a financial assessment at the time of death.

www.lastpostfund.ca or 1-800-465-7113.

RCMP and Department of National Defence: A burial allowance is available to anyone whose death occurred during their tenure with the Armed Forces or The RCMP. **www.forces.gc.ca** or 1-800-883-6094. For regular reserve.

First Nations/Native Canadians: The Band usually oversees the arrangements. Some financial assistance may be available.

www.aadnc.aandc.gc.ca or 1-800-567-9604.

ONGOING INCOME

For the Survivors

CPP for Surviving Spouse: must be the legal or common law opposite sex spouse of which a conjugal relationship for at least one year. **www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp** or 1-800-277-9914.

Supplemental Benefits for Surviving Spouse: must be over 65, Canadian Residency and have a low income. **www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp** or 1-800-277-9914.

Widowed Spouses Allowance: must be between the ages of 60 and 65 with limited income and reside in Canada.

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp or 1-800-277-9914.

CPP Children's Benefit: must be the child of or a child in custody of the deceased and either under 18 years of age or up to 25 years still in full time school.

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp or 1-800-277-9914.

WSIB Benefit Plans: If the deceased was killed on the job or died as a result of the job, spouses and children may be eligible for benefits.

www.wsib.on.ca or 1-800-387-0750.

Any Private Benefits: should be researched (usually from the employer of the deceased). Typically ongoing income is not available other than the federal survivor pensions.



Document Checklist for END OF LIFE

- ✓ Prepaid Funeral Expenses
 - ✓ Will
 - ✓ Drivers License
 - ✓ Death Certificate (at least 10 copies)
 - ✓ First Nations Status Card
 - ✓ Health Card
 - ✓ Birth Certificate
 - ✓ Social Insurance Card
 - ✓ Life Insurance Policies
 - ✓ Bank or Credit Union Passbooks
 - ✓ Car Insurance and Ownership
 - ✓ Investments
 - ✓ Income tax Returns
 - ✓ Marriage/Divorce Certificate
 - ✓ Medical Benefits Card
 - ✓ Pay stubs
 - ✓ Passwords to computers, web sites, etc.
 - ✓ Real Estate/Property Title Deeds
 - ✓ Safety Deposit Keys
 - ✓ Housing Bills (utilities, rent, mortgage statements)
 - ✓ Loan/Credit card Statements
- (www.equifax.ca/credit-report-ca and
www.transunion.ca/ca/personal)

It is easiest to keep all of the above in one safe place and ensure the Executor knows where.

Approximate Costs Summary for END OF LIFE

A direct cremation is when the deceased is simply collected from the place of passing and transferred for immediate cremation. The remains are then given to the family.

DESCRIPTION	LOW \$	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
Cremation box (pine)	500		\$ _____
Casket	600		
Urn (any container)	0		\$ _____
Embalming (not necessary)	350		\$ _____
Funeral Director's – Cremation	1,350		\$ _____
Facility rentals	150		\$ _____
Settlement Certificate & Fees	500		\$ _____
Burial	0		\$ _____
Remains & Staff Transfer	0		\$ _____
Grave Marker	0		\$ _____
Viewing and Ceremony	0		\$ _____
Obituary (Print or Radio)	0		\$ _____
Stationery	0		\$ _____
TOTAL	2,300		\$ _____

*Cremation generally costs about a quarter of what a burial costs.

Our wishes before passing are intimate and personal but best if shared with the people responsible for carrying out our or the family member’s wishes.

To our knowledge, there is no province or territory in Canada that legally requires embalming (unless a body is transported over a considerable distance), or even the use of a funeral home or director. In fact, many religious traditions (such as Jewish and Muslim) require that the body not be embalmed; and that family/community be directly involved in the post-death care and/or burial, with minimal intervention from a funeral home (if at all) — and these traditions have been honoured throughout Canadian history. (www.canadianfunerals.com)

In Ontario there is no law against scattering ashes on Crown land, however, permission must be gained to spread ashes on private property, Municipal areas, lakeshores, waterways and parks.

A ceremony can take place anywhere family wishes to gather.

Notes & Comments


