

WIDOW

checklist



This list is not an all-inclusive roadmap, is not intended to be used as legal advice, nor should it be considered a substitute for a meeting with a licensed estate attorney, but it will provide you with some tips that may make things easier in the weeks and months ahead.

- Take it slow. Don't make any major financial decisions right away.
- Document your team of consultants including their names and phone numbers (i.e. banker, insurance agents, stock broker, realtor, mortgage professional, etc.)
- Through these difficult times, make sure you take copious notes for your records. This will serve as a reference at later dates.
- Get several (15-20) certified copies of death certificates. You will need to send them to credit card, mortgage, and other companies/agencies to confirm the death of your spouse.
- Retitle assets including real estate and other property held jointly with rights of survivorship.
- Make sure your medical insurance stays in force.
- Submit claims on your spouse's life insurance policies—coverage through employer, group, individual, accidental benefits, and VA coverage.
- Review policies on your life to insurance that they are meeting your current needs (i.e. life, disability, long-term care).
- Make beneficiary changes (i.e. retirement plans, annuities, and life insurance). Update beneficiary designations on your personal life insurance and qualified plans.
- Suspend systematic withdrawal from deceased spouse's retirement accounts.
- Check with deceased spouse's previous employers for survivor benefits and life insurance.
- Transfer individual IRA, and other investment accounts, into your name (check with your tax and financial advisor first).
- Settle the Estate and revise your Will, Power of Attorney, Healthcare Proxy, and Living Will. Establish a new POA for yourself. Name a new healthcare agent within your healthcare directive. Review and/or create new wills and trusts.
- Meet with your financial advisor, tax advisor, and estate attorney to redefine your financial goals and objectives. This may open an off cycle open enrollment (i.e. life changing events).