

Checklist for Personal Finances

___ **Legal documents.** Get your will and power-of-attorney paperwork in order. For your will, you need to choose an executor to manage your estate. (Be sure to ask the person if he or she is willing to take on the responsibility.) A power of attorney might be the same person, or maybe you'll choose a different relative or trusted adviser to make financial or health care decisions on your behalf while you are alive.

___ **Income statements.** Chronicle all the sources and amounts of your regular income (pension, Social Security, dividends or other investments) and how it is disbursed (automatic deposit, monthly or quarterly checks by mail, etc.). Use a spreadsheet or personal finance software to review the performance of your investments regularly, making adjustments to stay diversified.

___ **Regular expenses.** List all your ongoing bills and whether you pay them online or by check.

___ **Account information.** Write down all bank accounts, investment accounts, credit cards, loans or other financial relationships you have; provide account numbers, account names and contact information.

___ **Professional contacts:** Make note of your lawyer, accountant, doctor, minister or anyone else who might need to be consulted on your behalf.

___ **Passwords.** This list grows over time, but it's really important to share it with others in case of an emergency. For every account, list all usernames and passwords. And don't just stop at the bank accounts. Your frequent flier plans or rewards clubs are probably worth something.

___ **Safe deposit box.** Make a list of everything in your box; note where both the box and its key are.

___ **Charitable giving plans.** If L.J you want to give to your alma mater or another organization, let the charity know in advance. They might be able to set up a tax-advantaged mechanism for giving.

Final wishes. What are your burial wishes, including guidance for the service and your preferred funeral home? Consider an "ethical will" or letter that conveys your values, memories or final thoughts to be read to loved ones when the time comes.

Checklist completed? Good for you! Now be sure to tell a trusted friend or family member where to find everything listed here and share copies of key lists and papers.