

The Importance of Having a Will

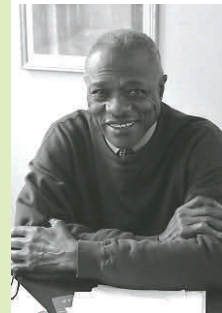
Individuals should have a will so that family or friends can be assured that their wishes for the distribution of their estate will be honored. A will is a legal document that designates how goals are to be accomplished when an individual passes away. It is your personal instruction manual. When an individual does not have a will, the estate will be distributed according to the laws of the state in which the deceased resided.

Since only the original signed and witnessed Will is legally recognized, the Will should be stored in a safe place. A fire proof box or your attorney's office may be the best place. Copies may be maintained for your records and distributed as you wish. If you choose to keep your original will in a bank safety deposit box, state regulations may make it difficult to remove it at the time of your death. Be certain your family, executor, or attorney know where your original copy is stored. Wills may be amended at any time; it is wise to review it along with other valuable documents regularly, especially if there is a change in family structure such as marriage, births, divorce, or death of a loved one.

Important issues to consider when creating your Will:

- Compile an accurate list of your assets.
- List the people you want to receive an inheritance.
- Name an executor and a successor executor who can manage your estate.
- Name a guardian for your children if they are under 18 years of age.
- Decide if you wish to make gifts to favorite charities or organizations.
- Name alternate beneficiaries should your heirs die before you do.
- You need two disinterested individuals to witness a Will.

Read your prepared Will and other documents carefully and make any necessary changes before you sign. An attorney should always be consulted if there are complex legal issues that need planning such as multiple families or businesses, special health needs for heirs, and gift and estate tax liabilities.



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