

2026 · WHAT ISSUES SHOULD I CONSIDER IF MY PARENT PASSED AWAY?



CASH FLOW ISSUES	YES	NO
<p>Was your parent married when they passed away? If so, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If your parent was receiving Social Security benefits, their surviving spouse may be eligible for survivor benefits. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did your parent reach their Required Beginning Date, or were they taking an RMD (from an inherited IRA) at the time of their death? If so, the beneficiary(ies) must satisfy any remaining RMD amount on behalf of your parent before the end of the year.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Was your parent receiving a pension? If so, payments may stop or, if your parent was married, be adjusted for survivor benefits.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ESTATE SETTLEMENT ISSUES	YES	NO
<p>Do any accounts or other assets require ownership to be updated?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any beneficiary be inheriting any of your parent's assets and have more assets than they need to maintain their lifestyle? If so, and acceptable contingent beneficiaries have been named, they may wish to disclaim these assets to shift them to other beneficiaries. This generally must be done within nine months of the date of death.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your parent's estate exceed their remaining federal estate and gift tax exclusion amount (\$15 million, if no lifetime use), or will your parents' combined estates exceed their remaining combined exclusion amounts (\$30 million, if no lifetime use)? If so, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Your parent's estate may have a federal estate tax liability due. ■ Proceeds from a life insurance policy owned by the deceased and values of retirement accounts are included in the gross estate. ■ If your parent was married, to maintain portability of unused exemption, the estate must file IRS Form 706 (even if a 706 is not otherwise required). If a 706 is filed only to elect portability, it is due within five years of the date of death. (continue on next column) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ESTATE SETTLEMENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)	YES	NO
<p>If there is an estate tax liability, was the total value of the estate on the date of death greater than the value at six months after the date of death? If so, you may elect on Form 706 to use the alternate valuation date to reduce estate taxes, valuing all assets as of six months after the date of death (unless sold within that period).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Could there be property and assets not yet identified? If so, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Look at the "points" feature on credit cards and "miles" with airlines to see if they are transferable. ■ Check for safe deposit boxes but be sure to follow probate rules before opening. ■ Search state agencies and unclaimed property sites that are run by many state treasurers. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you expect to inherit any assets from your parent or was your parent included in your own estate plan? If so, consider updating your own estate plan.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Are there digital assets that should be preserved?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INSURANCE ISSUES	YES	NO
<p>Was your parent employed at the time of death? The employer/union may provide group life insurance and/or compensation related to their employment.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Was the death accidental or work related? If so, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some financial institutions and professional associations may offer a small lump-sum benefit. ■ The employer/union may offer additional death benefits. ■ If your parent was married, the spouse may be eligible for worker's compensation and/or death benefits. (continue on next page) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INSURANCE ISSUES (CONTINUED)	YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some life insurance policies have an “accidental death” provision for higher benefits. 		
<p>Was your parent a veteran? If so, there may be death and burial benefits, a survivor pension, and/or other benefits.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did your parent have a child under age 18 or a child permanently disabled? If so, your parent’s spouse and/or the child may be eligible for Social Security benefits.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Could there be any life insurance owned by your parent or insuring the life of your parent that has not been identified or claimed?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TAX ISSUES	YES	NO
<p>Did your parent own a home and were they survived by a spouse? If so, the surviving spouse may still qualify for the \$500,000 capital gains housing exclusion if the home is sold within two years of your parent’s death, and other conditions are met.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did your parent own other property jointly, such as an investment account? If so, the joint owner may receive a step-up in basis for assets passing from your parent. Reference “Will I Receive A Step-Up In Basis For The Appreciated Property I Inherited?” flowchart.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you need to confirm that all of your parent’s prior income taxes have been paid? If so, contact the IRS and the state taxing authorities to check if any back taxes are due and make any necessary payments.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did your parent file as Married Filing Jointly? If so, the surviving spouse can continue to file as MFJ in the year your parent passed away.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Was your parent married and did they have a dependent child? If so, your parent’s spouse may be able to use the Qualifying Widow(er) tax filing status for the two tax years following the year your parent passed away.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INVESTMENT & ASSET ISSUES	YES	NO
<p>Did your parent have stock options, grants, or restricted stock units? If so, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check employer plan documents to understand how these assets are treated after your parent’s death. Beneficiaries should be aware of potential tax ramifications of accelerated stock vesting. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Has the change in circumstances altered investment objectives or risk tolerance for family members inheriting assets?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Was your parent married and did they have carryforward investment losses? If so, consider having the surviving spouse realize investment gains in the year of death. Your parent’s carryforwards can be used on their final tax return, but will be lost thereafter.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did your parent own an annuity? If so, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your parent’s spouse (if applicable) may be able to inherit a non-qualified annuity as their own if they were listed as beneficiary on the policy. A non-spouse beneficiary will have to take required distributions from a non-qualified annuity. Non-qualified annuities do not receive a step-up in basis, so be aware of potential tax ramifications with distributions. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

OTHER ISSUES	YES	NO
<p>Do you need to reduce the threat of identity theft? If so, cancel your parent’s email accounts, social media accounts, and driver’s license, and notify credit bureaus, the election board, etc.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Are there any state-specific issues that should be considered (including out-of-state property or estate tax liability)?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>