

How to Prepare for Probate and Estate Administration in North Carolina

by Starrett Law Firm (Charlotte, NC)



You've lost a loved one. Let us offer our condolences.

We recognize the days and weeks ahead will be difficult on many levels, not the least of which is preparing for North Carolina's probate and estate administration procedure. Our experience suggests that the steps below apply in most circumstances and will help guide you through the next several weeks.

First, act immediately. You should waste little time making certain arrangements. For example, notify family and friends of the death. Call the funeral home and start to plan a service that honors the decedent. Arrange for the care of any dependent of the decedent, such as a minor child or an elderly spouse, as well as any pet. Secure the decedent's residence and safeguard, but do not distribute, the decedent's property for the time being. Write the obituary.

Second, get organized within two weeks. While communicating with the funeral director, request ten certified copies of the death certificate. Gather all paperwork and information relating to the decedent's property and accounts such as bank accounts, life insurance policies, and retirement accounts. From this data, draft an estimated inventory of the decedent's assets. Also, list all known liabilities. Locate the decedent's original will and trust. Track all of your time and expenses for the actions you are taking.

Third, call an attorney within three weeks. Scheduling a consultation with a trusts and estates attorney is one of the most prudent actions you can take in this situation. There are numerous rules and deadlines that must be observed in probate and estate administration. A wrong or delayed decision can be a costly mistake. After the consultation, you will be more familiar with the process and better able to assess if hiring an attorney for ongoing advice is appropriate.

Finally, don't forget to grieve. Reflect on the loss of your loved one and what it means to you. Stay in close contact with your family and friends for support. Realize there's no timeline for finding closure. Take things one day at a time.

For more information on North Carolina probate and estate administration and to discuss your specific circumstances, contact a North Carolina trusts and estates attorney today.

Starrett Law Firm is a Charlotte estate planning, probate, and business law firm in Ballantyne that serves clients across the greater Charlotte area and North Carolina. We help clients understand complex legal principles and make sound decisions that protect them as well as their families or businesses. For more information about the firm, please visit our website at www.starrettlawfirm.com.