



Employee NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
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Tips from Your EAP on Wills: Simplifying the Uncomfortable Document

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There's a reason that "updating your will" is perennially on the bottom of your to-do list: the topic is uncomfortable, and maybe a little confusing. Wills are an essential legal document for most people though, even those without children. With a little bit of research, this topic can be less overwhelming as you get a better idea of just how wills work. Below are some basics about wills, including questions that you may want to ask sooner, rather than later.

Basics of Wills

- You must declare that the document you are signing is your will.
- Your signature must be witnessed by others – usually 2-3 witnesses – who must sign the will in each other's presence.
- Each state has its own requirements for how signatures must be worded.
- The most common and accepted will is a self-proving will, which is one where that has been witnessed and signed in accordance with state law.

- Keep your will in a safe place, such as a bank safe deposit box or a fireproof safe at home.
- Let relevant parties know where your will is located and how to access it.
- Designate your executor to have access to your safe deposit box, as many states put a freeze on safe deposit boxes after the owner dies.

Details to Put in Wills

- You are of sound mind as you are reading and signing the will.
- The names, locations, and dates of birth of your immediate family, including your spouse and any designated beneficiaries.
- Appointment of a guardian and alternate guardian for any minor children.
- A list of who should inherit specific items of property. Instructions for this list may vary by state.
- What will happen to any remaining property that isn't specifically mentioned by you.
- Who will be your "executor," or the person responsible for carrying out the directions in your will.

When Should I Update My Will?

- If you marry or divorce
- If you give birth to or adopt a child
- When a family member or other beneficiary of your estate dies

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- When someone you've named as an executor, trustee or guardian is no longer able to fulfill that role
- When you decide to change an executor, trustee, or guardian
- When you want to change the way your property will be distributed
- When you move out of state
- When your net worth increases dramatically

Your EAP is Here to Help

In addition to the confusion it brings, writing a will can be a sobering experience, but a necessary one. Many people will find some peace of mind knowing that their loved ones will be taken care of, and having a will early will save you trouble later in life.

If you feel overwhelmed, remember to check out the EAP website at www.firstchoiceEAP.com. Not only does the website have some great information on preparing wills, but it also has many ready-made legal forms for download.

Ultimately, we recommend that you consult with an attorney before finalizing a will. Your EAP Program has legal resources available for you to develop your will. A legal consultation with an attorney is available through the EAP. Your first half-hour consultation is of no cost to you and your covered family members. Discounted legal fees are also available.

Knowing the basics of wills can help you better understand the process overall, enabling you to feel prepared for when it's time to have that big conversation. If you're ready to get started, contact us at 800-777-4114 for a referral to an attorney to consult about your will.