

GUARDIAN CHECKLIST

- Obtain certified copy of guardianship order. You must keep the original.
- Have a copy of the guardianship order readily available.
- Obtain at least one certified copy of the guardianship order, and provide a copy of court order whenever needed as proof of your appointment as the guardian.

GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE

- Open new guardianship accounts with the bank. Title account as “Name of incapacitated person, by guardian’s name, guardian.” Ensure that only the Social Security number of the incapacitated person is on any guardianship account.
- Close the old account after all direct deposits are changed to the new guardian account.
- Change mailing address and direct mail to the guardian’s address.
- Obtain Social Security Number and card – Seek replacement card if needed.
- Distinguish between Social Security and Supplemental Security Income. Be clear on eligibility criteria.
- Apply for disability benefits if appropriate.
- Complete Social Security Administration form SSA-11-BK to apply to be the representative payee for the incapacitated person.
- Once guardian is appointed representative payee, contact the Social Security Administration to arrange for direct deposit to guardianship account.
- Representative payee must file an annual report. You will receive the report form in the mail from the Social Security Administration each year. Make sure to keep a copy for your records.
- Contact pension plans and any other sources of income to become authorized to act on behalf of the incapacitated person.
- Arrange for direct deposit and change the mailing address to the guardian’s address.
- Sort through all old and new mail.
- Identify and set up a bill payment schedule and budget.
- Determine if a credit report is necessary.
- Locate prior income tax returns or file request to receive from Internal Revenue Service.
- Arrange for annual completion of local, state and federal tax filings as needed.

- Determine status of credit card accounts and, if appropriate, close the accounts. If the past due balance is in collection and funds are available to pay, negotiate a lump sum payment to close account.
- Safeguard property and assets.
- If the incapacitated person has a car or any other vehicle, establish who has the keys and obtain them. Search for title and inspection status, check with Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation /Bureau of Motor Vehicles for current registration and insurance status as needed.
- If there is a safe deposit box, complete an inventory of the contents, and determine whether to keep the box open or to close it.
- Search residence for important papers such as wills, deeds, cash, jewelry, photos and other valuables, and remove them to a safe place after completing an inventory and appraisal.
- If there is property owned by the incapacitated person, check with the county official records office for ownership of property and tax claim. Locate all deeds.
- Determine who has access to the residence and obtain a key. Determine if locks need to be changed at the property.
- If the incapacitated person is no longer in his or her home and the home is vacant, make sure proper insurance coverage is obtained and in place.
- Appraise property prior to any sale or distribution.
- Arrange for the sale or removal of furnishings or other items.
- Place money from any sale in a guardianship account.
- If you must sell property, arrange for court approval of the sale.
- Obtain court approval before using funds to pay attorney fees or your own expenses.
- Determine and pay property taxes as needed.
- File a petition with court if there is a need to invade principal or obtain funds from principal.
- Complete an online application at www.benefitscheckup.org to check on eligible benefits. Once eligible benefits are determined, file applications to receive them.
- Determine if pre-need/arranged funeral plans have been arranged. If not, initiate prepaid funeral and burial plans by establishing an irrevocable trust agreement.
- When prepaid funeral plans are established, share the funeral home and contact information with the appropriate parties.
- Determine and locate a will. Seek to find the original.

- The court requires you to file an inventory within 90 days of your appointment.
- You are required to file an annual report of the guardian of estate. The date of filing corresponds to the date of the initial court appointment/hearing date.
- To prepare for the filing of the report, maintain detailed records of income and expenses that include receipts and statements from banks/investments. Keep a copy for your records.
- Guardian duties cease at time of the incapacitated person's death. As applicable, the Social Security Administration, Department of Human Services, Veterans Administration and other sources of income, benefits and pensions must be informed of the incapacitated person's death.
- A final report to the court must be filed within 60 days of the incapacitated person's death, or if your appointment of guardian is terminated. Keep a copy for your records.

REAL ESTATE

- If there is property owned by the incapacitated person, check with county official records for ownership of property and tax claim. Locate all deeds.
- Determine and pay property taxes as needed.
- Determine who has access to the residence and obtain a key. Determine if locks need to be changed at the property.
- If the incapacitated person is no longer in his/her home, and the home is vacant, make sure proper insurance coverage is obtained and in place.
- Appraise property prior to any sale or distribution.
- Arrange for sale or removal of furnishings or other items.
- Place money from any sale in guardian account.
- If you must sell property, obtain a court approval of sale.
- Obtain court approval before using funds to pay attorney fees or your own expenses.

GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON

- Provide your name and contact information to all health care providers, clergy, family, friends, neighbors, social workers, caregivers and others who are regularly in contact with the incapacitated person, and advise them that you are the guardian.
- Provide the court order appointing you guardian when indicated to hospital, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, residential facilities, health care providers, etc. Make sure all health care providers have a copy of the court order.
- Obtain all medical insurance information, including Medicare, supplemental insurance, Medicare Part D, etc. Review these health care plans annually (be aware of open enrollment time frames) and/or as needed.
- For those receiving medical assistance benefits, annual renewal is required. Renewal forms indicating due dates for completion as well as documentation needed will be sent to you in the mail.
- Determine and locate the incapacitated person's advance directive. If there is one, it will guide health care decision-making.
- Request copies of medical records and pertinent information from service providers as needed.
- Initiate and maintain communication with health care and mental health providers.
- The court requires you to file an annual report of the guardian of the person. The filing date corresponds to the date of the initial court hearing. The best way to prepare the report is to keep a log of visits with the incapacitated person, as well as important meetings or phone contacts made for them. Maintain a copy for your records.
- A final report must be filed within 60 days of the incapacitated person's death, or if your appointment as guardian is terminated. Maintain a copy for your records.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

- If the incapacitated person resides in a facility, attend plan of care meetings on a regular basis. Keep track of ongoing physician visits and health care appointments.
- Make requests for and monitor vision, dental, auditory and podiatry care as needed if the incapacitated person resides in a facility.
- Inquire about availability and cost of hair stylists and barbers in facilities. Establish need to make standing appointments for such services.
- Visit the incapacitated person on a regular basis (if he or she does not live with you) to make sure he or she is being cared for properly.
- Keep track of dates and time spent during your visits.

- Make sure the facility informs you of significant health status changes, medication changes, room and/or roommate changes, emergency treatments offsite and/or for recreational/leisure outings, family visits or holiday celebrations.
- Determine if there is a need to set up a resident account in the facility.
- Arrange for purchasing needed supplies, clothing, personal hygiene items, etc.
- Make sure personal items are labeled and recorded on the personal inventory. As additional items are brought in, request that the inventory is updated and a copy for your records. Report lost/missing items to the administration. If items are not found, request reimbursement. Specific items of value may include hearing aids, glasses, orthopedic shoes, canes, walkers and wheelchairs.