

# What matters in the end

Life File checklist



Your Life File is a critical collection of documents, contracts and financial information designed to assist your loved ones in the event of your passing.

Everyone's Life File will vary, but it should contain sufficient detail and information to guide your family and Executor in efficiently managing your estate according to your wishes.

Allocate some time to thoroughly compile this file using this guide. Whether you make a physical or digital copy is up to you. What is important is that it is accessible to your loved ones when needed.

**A comprehensive Life File would include the following elements:**

## 1. Personal note and letter of wishes

**Personal note:** Consider writing a personal letter to your loved ones to express your wishes and offer comfort or encouragement. This letter can serve as a gentle reminder of certain administrative aspects that you are knowledgeable about, which can assist them during the estate administration process. It may also serve as the first page in your Life File.

**Letter of wishes:** The letter of wishes can provide helpful guidance regarding the distribution of personal items or minor assets mentioned in your Last Will and Testament but not specifically detailed (while the Executor takes this letter seriously, it is important to note that it is not legally binding). Any wishes concerning the distribution of your estate should ultimately be included in your Last Will and Testament. Additionally, it can include your preferences and specifications regarding burial arrangements.

## 2. Information section

This is a detailed record of all the information central to your daily life, including information required to close accounts, cancel debit orders and terminate services no longer required.

These records should also document the full extent of your local and offshore assets, liabilities, life insurance, retirement savings, loans payable or receivable in a balance sheet, with corresponding monetary values. This gives your family a complete understanding of your financial situation.

Include all the original or hard copies of documents, certificates, licenses and deeds that will be required to administer your estate.

The goal is to do all the hard work upfront, establishing a proper system that is clearly labelled and easy to follow. Once you've done this, updating and maintaining the Life File will be much more straightforward.

### Once your Life File is completed:

- Discuss it with your closest family members. Let them know what it contains and where it is kept
- Review it annually to keep it up to date. Set a reminder if necessary. Check and update the contact information for all emergency contacts
- Review and revise your will and living will to ensure they reflect your wishes
- Ensure that beneficiary nominations on life insurance policies and retirement accounts are up to date
- Conduct a liquidity analysis: can you cover immediate expenses and do you have sufficient cover or funds to settle any liabilities?
- Let a trusted emergency contact know the location of your Life File.

### Important notes on document storage

- **Secure location:** Always store the originals in a secure location, such as a fireproof safe, and keep copies in a separate location or with a trusted family member.
- **Digital backup:** Keep digital copies of your most important documents safe in Private Vault.
- **Electronic folder:** If you decide to keep an electronic life file ensure that your loved ones know where to find the hard copy or original documents.

# Personal records and documents



\*Hard copy/original documents to be included

## 1. Emergency procedure and contact details

Note the emergency procedure to follow upon your passing:

1. Obtain the death certificate
2. Obtain the Last Will and Testament
3. Contact the Executor of the estate
4. Notify the appropriate authorities and financial institutions
5. Cancel any debit orders associated with the deceased
6. Confirm medical aid coverage for the dependents of the deceased.

List contact details for key individuals involved in the estate process, such as next of kin, banker, attorney, financial adviser, Executor, doctor, insurance broker, other trusted adviser.

### Per contact

Name

Relationship

Telephone number

Email address

## 2. Personal information

Full name

Maiden name/previous name

SA ID number/foreigner date of birth

Nationality

Contact numbers

Email addresses

SA income tax number, registered office and eFiling login details

Your Last Will and Testament held by (person/company name & contact number)

Nominated executor(s) in will & contact details

Living will held by (person/company name & contact number)

Funeral cover (name and contact details of the institution providing the cover)

Funeral parlour name and contact details



### Identification documents\*

ID document/Smart ID (front and back)

Birth certificate

Passport

Driver's licence

Proof of residence

Citizenship documentation, work visas/permits



### Education documents\*

Qualifications

School records

Degree certificates



\*Hard copy/original documents to be included

### 3. Marital records

Unmarried

Married

Date of marriage

#### Marriage regime:

In Community of Property

Out of Community of Property: with/without accrual

Married according to Muslim/Hindu Rites

Customary marriage

Foreign marriage (state country)

Civil partnership



#### Marital documents (as applicable)\*

Original marriage certificate or partnership agreement

Antenuptial contract

Affidavit signed by a commissioner of oath if a customary union or marriage under the tenets of any other religion or a permanent life partner has been concluded

Divorce decree

Copy of settlement agreement

Custody agreement and parenting plan

Death certificate of predeceased spouse

### 4. Spouse/partner details

Full name

SA ID number/foreigner date of birth

Nationality

Contact numbers

Email address

### 5. Children's details

#### Per child

ID number/date of birth

Contact telephone number

Email address

Home address

Location of supporting documents



#### Children's documents\*

Birth certificate

Vaccination record

School records

Death certificate of predeceased children

Any relevant religious documents

### 6. Health and medical information

Medical aid membership details  
(including plan and membership number)

Main member and dependents

Instructions for changes to cover should main member pass away

Gap cover policy number

Blood group

Important medical history for yourself and family members



#### Medical documents\*

Living will (this contains details of your wishes and preferences for medical treatment in the event of your incapacity. Discuss this with your doctor and family to ensure awareness of your wishes.)

Organ donor (Y/N) – copy of registration card



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## 7. Employment information

Company name

Contact person(s)

Contact telephone number

Employee number

Employment pension fund details

Employment related funeral benefits and group life cover



### Employment documents\*

Employment contract

Latest pay slip if still employed

## 8. Details of staff employed by you in your personal capacity

### Per staff member

ID Number/date of birth

Contact telephone number

Email address

Home address

Retirement Annuity policy

UIF number

Wages

Banking details

Location of supporting documents



### Staff documents\*

Copy of employment contract (if applicable)

## 9. Pet information

### Per pet

Pet name(s)

Vet name

Vet contact telephone number

Pet insurance details

Pet special instructions



### Pet important documents\*

Pet vaccination certificates

Pet registration papers

## 10. Household service providers

Per service provider (eg electrician, plumber, alarm technician, handyman, borehole service provider, solar service provider)

Company contact number

Email address

## 11. Security information

### Per property owned

Armed response company, contact person(s) and telephone number

Home alarm code, home alarm administrator's code and password

Safety deposit box number and location

Home safe code and location

Home safe key location

Home access control codes

Location of spare keys and remote controls



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## 12. Mobile phone information

### Per mobile phone

PIN number or passcode

IMEI number (15-digit)

PUK number

Contract holder

## 13. Other important considerations and documents



### Legal documents\*

Original Last Will and Testament

Details and documents of any business interests (partnerships, sole proprietorships, companies, closed corporations)

Beneficiary nominations for any life or investment policies held

Trust documents

Loan agreements

Any pending legal documents or notices (copies)

Any lease agreements

Settlement agreements (original and copies)

Power of attorney (you may wish to appoint someone to manage your financial and legal affairs on your behalf. Please note that in South Africa, a power of attorney is only valid whilst the person is alive and able to make his/her own decisions. In case of mental incapacity, the power of attorney lapses)



### Miscellaneous documents\*

Copies of any important correspondence that will have any bearing on the closing of your estate (eg letters from attorneys, banks etc.)

## 14. Balance sheet

Provide a balance sheet listing your assets and liabilities with corresponding values. Print a copy and place it in your file. It must include (as applicable):

### Assets

Movable assets both locally and offshore (vehicles, artwork, jewellery, furniture etc.)

Immovable property (local and offshore)

Bank accounts (local and offshore)

List of investments (local and offshore)

Retirement savings information (local and offshore): pension fund, provident fund, preservation fund, retirement annuities and living annuities

Life insurance policies, values, and nominated beneficiaries

Education policies

Unvested share options

List of loans owed to you (loans receivable)

### Liabilities

Mortgage bonds

List of liabilities (loans payable)



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## 15. Your assets and other interests

Details of all assets and liabilities. If married in community of property, include details of spouse's assets

List of any trusts that you are a beneficiary and/or settlor and/or trustee of

List of companies of which you are a director and/or shareholder



### Important documents\*

Recent statements of cash, fixed deposits, unit trusts, offshore assets

Original title deeds to immovable property or bondholder's details

Vehicle registration papers (Natis) or finance agreement details

Share certificates or scrip account details for any shares held

Policy contracts for life, endowment, or annuity policies held

Insurance schedules for fixed properties and vehicles

Original firearm license and location of any firearms or ammunition

Lists of personal property (vehicles, valuable collectibles) with descriptions and valuation certificates

Business ownership or partnership documents (if applicable, original and copies)

Trusts (local and offshore): original trust deeds, amendments, letters of authority and letters of wishes for the trust, if in your possession

## 16. Financial affairs and information checklist

Bank account details (including account numbers, bank names and contact information)

List all debit orders, recurring payments and subscriptions (eg medical aid, gap cover, utilities, gym memberships, mobile phone accounts, short-term insurance, vehicle tracking services, service and maintenance contracts, internet and fiber service providers, DSTV subscriptions, TV license and number, streaming services, landline telephone)

List of all investment accounts (stocks, bonds, unit trust funds)

List of all retirement savings accounts (pension/provident/preservation fund and retirement annuities) and beneficiary nominations

Details of any life insurance policies, including policy numbers and beneficiary nominations

List of short-term insurance policies (car and house insurance, mobile phone insurance, credit card insurance etc.)

List of outstanding debts and liabilities (mortgages, loans, credit cards, store cards) with their details, including account numbers and contact information for creditors

Details of any suretyships or guarantees

Income tax details (tax clearance certificate, details of tax consultant if applicable, emigration certificates, if applicable.)

## 17. Digital assets and social media accounts

Password manager: login and password information (update your password manager with username and passwords for bank accounts, bank card PIN codes, mobile phone passcodes, email account passwords, online subscription accounts, social media platforms, cloud services and crypto currency vaults). Ensure your login and password is known to a trusted contact

Details of any cryptocurrency or other digital investments held

Record how you want your digital assets to be managed on your death (transferred, archived or deleted)

Nominate a legacy contact on each of your social media profiles so that your profiles can be memorialised or deleted