

TWO THINGS CERTAIN®

December 2015

Year End Round Up
By Daniel Gasink

We are again tying up loose ends as 2015 comes to a close. This year has shown us a new Williamsburg office, new faces in the office, and many new clients-turned-friends. The theme for this month's newsletter is your "End of Year Planning Checklist." Please also note that enrollment for our TrustGuard™ annual review program will be open through February 2016- see the note at the end of this Newsletter. Happy Holidays to all!

End Of Year Planning Checklist

1. Read Your Estate Plan and Verify Beneficiaries

Open your big blue binder and flip to the pages that list your beneficiaries. Make sure your Will or Trust names the right people and percentages. If a beneficiary has passed on or drifted away, make sure you call our office if any updates are needed.

2. Read Your Estate Plan and Verify Trustees, Executors & Guardians

While you have the blue book off the shelf, see who you designated to manage your financial affairs at your death or incapacity. If you have minor children, pay special attention to who you named as Guardian in your Will. Be sure to call us if you have a question or need a change.

3. Talk To Your Fiduciaries

A Fiduciary is someone you have named to manage your affairs. In the context of your Estate Plan, they are your Executors, Trustees, Guardians, and Agents under a Power of Attorney. Check in with your loved ones over the holidays and make sure they remain willing and able to take care of your affairs if/when needed.

4. Check Funding

You spent a lot of time with JGB naming the beneficiaries of your Will and Trust. Be sure to take stock of your account titles and insurance/IRA beneficiaries; double-check that everything is designated according to the directions we provided when you signed your documents. A Trust that is not properly funded will not avoid Probate.

5. Make A 'To-Do' List For Your Executor

Many of our clients add a page in the front pocket of their binder to notify their executor of things to do immediately upon death or incapacity. Your family may not know to notify certain friends, clergy, or advisors unless you provide instructions.

6. Fill Out Your Personal Information Section

Your binder has a 'Personal Information' section to tell a successor how to find your accounts and advisors. Make their job simpler by completing this section. Remember that your successors are not going to be feeling well or thinking clearly on the first day they begin work on your estate.

7. Fill Out Your Funeral & Burial Instructions Section

Tell your successor whether you wish to be buried or cremated and where you wish the remains to be interred. If you have made arrangements, tell where to find them. Note any desired hymns, readings, or other arrangements.

8. Letter Of Instruction

When providing instructions on how to disburse funds for a beneficiary, your legal documents use general terms like 'health' and 'support.' Many clients like to insert a handwritten letter of instruction into their binder to provide personal detailed instructions on how to care for a loved one or pet.

9. Look For 'Notes To Self' and Check Status

When JGB reviews an old plan with a client, we often find 'to-do' notes the client left him or herself listing tasks to be done and then were never executed. Look in your binder and see if there are any items you intended to do and forgot.

10. Enjoy the Holidays!

One lesson we never forget here at JGB is that we all need to revel in the good times. Spend time with friends and family. Travel somewhere you love. You will need that binder someday, but be sure to enjoy yourself in the meantime.

TrustGuard™ 2016

TrustGuard™ renewal enrollment for 2016 is now open. TrustGuard™ allows JGB Trust clients to feel secure knowing that their Trust plan remains current, effective, and relevant.

TrustGuard™ is for our clients who are serious about protecting their investment in a Trust-based estate plan with an annual review of the plan. The annual review includes and Trust funding and annual updates. We have sent an invitation both to clients who were paid TrustGuard™ members in 2015 and those whose trusts were signed in 2015.

Enrollment for the 2016 TrustGuard™ period ends on February 28, 2016. While in the past JGB allowed clients to drop in or out of the plan, we have had several cases of abuse and can no longer afford to allow a cancelled TrustGuard member to re-enroll. Consequently, clients who do not re-enroll during the enrollment period will not have another opportunity to enter into the program.

TrustGuard™ is a voluntary program, billed at an annual flat rate. Any JGB clients who are not enrolled in TrustGuard™ will pay for services covered by TrustGuard™ at our standard rates. If you pay your TrustGuard™ enrollment fee before February 1, 2016, you need only pay the reduced rate of \$600.00. Enrollments paid after February 1, 2016, but before February 28, 2016 (end of open enrollment), will be subject to the full TrustGuard™ fee of \$700.00. Contact our office for a TrustGuard™ Enrollment Form.



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About the Author:

Dan Gasink focuses his law practice on Wills, Trusts and Probate. He enjoys helping families through the difficult transitions of life and passing. Dan's law firm, Johnson, Gasink & Baxter, LLP solves clients' problems using careful planning, reliable procedures, hard work, and creativity.