US EDITION · PRINTABLE TEMPLATES

Their Digital Life

What to do with a loved one's phone, computer, email and photos after they're gone



Gareth Llewellyn

Their Digital Life

Printable checklists, forms and letters

What to Do With a Loved One's Phone, Computer, Email and Photos After They're Gone

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What to Do With a Loved One's Phone, Computer, Email and Photos After They're Gone

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These templates come from the book *Their Digital Life*. They are general information, not legal advice. Template E must be checked by an estate attorney in your state before you use it.

Updates and printable templates: theirdigitallife.com

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Start here: what do you have?

Every family starts in a different place. This page helps you find yours. Answer the eight questions, then follow the path that fits. You don't need to read the whole book.

Check yes or no for each question.

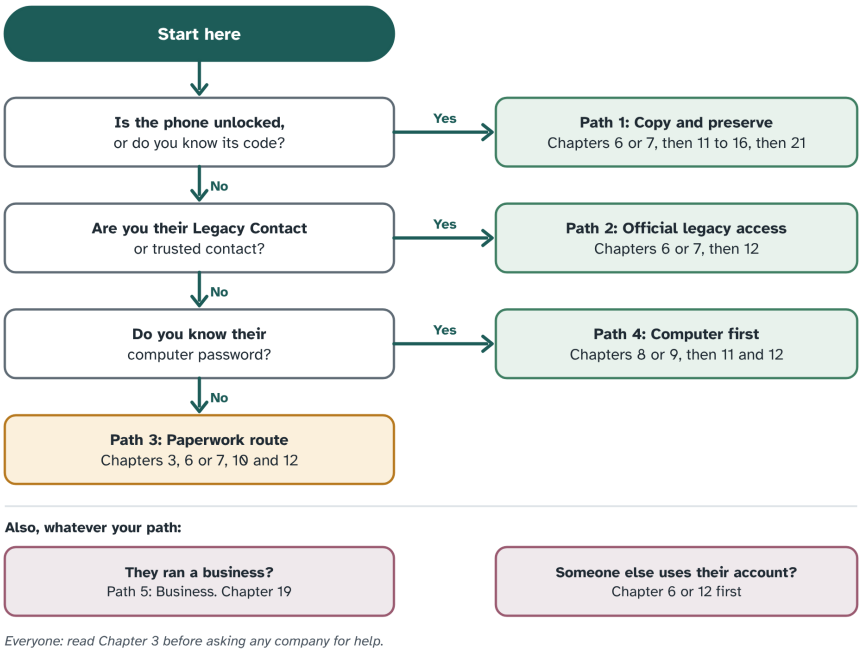
1. Do you know the code to unlock their phone?	☐ Yes	☐ No
2. Is any phone, tablet or computer still unlocked and switched on right now?	☐ Yes	☐ No
3. Do you know the password to log in to their computer?	☐ Yes	☐ No
4. Were you set up as their Legacy Contact (Apple), trusted contact (Google) or emergency contact (in a password manager)?	☐ Yes	☐ No
5. Is their main email already open on one of their own devices?	☐ Yes	☐ No
6. Is their cell phone number still active, with the SIM card (or eSIM) in the phone?	☐ Yes	☐ No
7. Did they run a business?	☐ Yes	☐ No
8. Does anyone else use their Apple or Google account? For example, a spouse or partner whose photos or iPad are signed in as them.	☐ Yes	☐ No

What your answers mean

- **Yes to 1** (you know the phone code): Path 1.
- **Yes to 2** (a device is unlocked now): stop and go back to step 3 of Chapter 1 first. It's the most time-sensitive thing in this book.
- **Yes to 3** (you know the computer password): Path 4.
- **Yes to 4** (you're their Legacy Contact, trusted contact or emergency contact): Path 2.
- **Yes to 5** (their email is open on their own device): read Chapter 11 soon, before anything is closed or frozen.
- **No to 6** (the number isn't active): go to Chapter 14 soon. A canceled number can sometimes be saved if you act quickly.
- **Yes to 7** (they ran a business): Path 5.

- **Yes to 8** (someone else uses their account): read "If someone else shares their Apple Account" in Chapter 6, or the shared-account part of Chapter 12, before you ask for any account to be closed or handed over. A spouse or partner can lose their own photos and apps.
- **No to 1, 3 and 4:** Path 3.

Now find your path.



Find your path

Your situation	What's realistic	Go to
The phone is unlocked, or you know the code	Nearly everything. You can save photos and messages, find their accounts and receive login codes. Act before anything changes.	**Path 1: Copy and preserve.** Chapters 6 or 7, then 11 to 16, then 21
You know the phone code but not their Apple or Google password	Good. The phone can receive login codes when a company's official process sends one. Don't reset their passwords (Chapter 3).	**Path 1**, plus Chapters 11 and 14
No phone code, but you're their Legacy Contact or trusted contact	Their online copies (photos, files, email) through the official process. What's only on the phone may be lost.	**Path 2: Official legacy access.** Chapters 6 or 7, then 12

Your situation	What's realistic	Go to
No phone code, and no legacy setup	What's only on the phone is usually lost. Online copies may be possible with paperwork, and in the US that often means a court order. Look for other copies too: shared albums, family phones, old computers.	**Path 3: Paperwork route.** Chapters 3, 6 or 7, 10 and 12
You know the computer password, but the phone is locked	The computer may hold backups, synced photos, saved passwords and email that is still signed in.	**Path 4: Computer first.** Chapters 8 or 9, then 11 and 12
They ran a business	Admin access, website names, accounting and client data come first.	**Path 5: Business.** Chapter 19
Someone else uses their account	That person's own photos, apps and devices may be tied to the account. Move them first.	Chapter 6 or 12, before anything else in Part D

More than one row may fit. Start with the row nearest the top. Everyone should read Chapter 3 (who can do what) before asking any company for help.

What every chapter labels for you

The device chapters (6 to 9) each start with two parts: "If you know the code" and "If you don't". Skip the part that doesn't apply. Every chapter marks each step as one of these:

- **Possible** you can do this yourself today.
- **Possible with paperwork** the company will help once you send documents.
- **Possible with help** a professional or tech helper can often do it.
- **Usually not possible** the honest answer, so you don't waste your energy.

If the death is expected, a child has died, or something else makes your situation unusual, read **Special situations** just after Start here, near the front of the book.

TEMPLATE A

First-48-hours checklist

Do these in the first two days. Everything else can wait. See Chapter 1 for the reasons.

Devices

- [ ] Find every phone, tablet, computer and smartwatch. Put them in one safe place.
- [ ] Plug in phones and tablets so they stay charged. Don't switch them off.
- [ ] If a phone is unlocked right now, stop it locking: change Auto-Lock or screen timeout to the longest setting. Turn off Low Power Mode.
- [ ] Don't try to guess any passcode. After 10 wrong tries, an iPhone locks and usually has to be erased.
- [ ] Don't erase, reset, sell or give away any device. Don't use Erase in Find My.
- [ ] Don't take devices to a repair shop yet.
- [ ] Don't use the person's face or finger to unlock a device.

Accounts

- [ ] Don't cancel the cell phone number. Keep paying the bill. Prepaid numbers can be lost after 60 days unpaid (Verizon and AT&T Prepaid) or 120 days (T-Mobile).
- [ ] Record any voicemail messages and the voicemail greeting. T-Mobile keeps messages 14 to 30 days, and T-Mobile and AT&T delete voicemails on transfer.
- [ ] Don't close their email account. If they had Outlook or Hotmail, note that Microsoft freezes it after 1 year without use.
- [ ] Don't post on their social media or report the death to social media yet.
- [ ] Don't cancel their bank cards before talking to the executor about bills that must keep being paid.

Paper and people

- [ ] Look for a notebook, address book or letter with passcodes or wishes.
- [ ] Find the will, if there is one. Note who the executor is.
- [ ] Order several certified copies of the death certificate (the funeral home can usually help).
- [ ] Check the funeral home is reporting the death to Social Security.
- [ ] Write down who has which device and when you collected it.
- [ ] Ask one calm, tech-confident person to be the "tech helper".
- [ ] If the police, medical examiner or coroner have their phone, ask when it will be returned. Don't try their accounts meanwhile.

TEMPLATE B

Device and account inventory

Make one row per device or account. Most people have dozens of accounts, so photocopy this page, or print extra copies from theirdigitallife.com/templates, before you start. Keep this list somewhere safe, because it shows where everything is. **Never write passwords on it.**

Devices

Device	Make and model	Where it is now	Passcode known? (Yes/No)	Linked to their account?	Saved?	Decision	Done (date)
e.g. iPhone	*iPhone 13*	*Kitchen drawer, charging*	*No*	*Yes (Apple)*	*Not yet*	*Legacy Contact request*	

Accounts

Company or service	Type (email, photos, social, money, subscription, other)	Username or email	Has money, photos or records?	Costs money? How much?	Deadline	Decision (memorialize, delete, leave, claim, cancel)	Request sent (date, reference)	Done (date)
e.g. Facebook	*Social*	*name@example.com*	*Photos*	*No*		*Memorialize*		
e.g. AAdvantage	*Miles*	*Member number*	*80,000 miles*	*No*	*Ask within 1 year of death*	*Ask to credit*		
e.g. Outlook	*Email*	*name@outlook.com*	*Emails*	*No*	*Frozen 1 year after last use*	*Leave, then decide*		

Devices (continued)

Device	Make and model	Where it is now	Passcode known? (Yes/No)	Linked to their account?	Saved?	Decision	Done (date)

Accounts (continued)

Company or service	Type (email, photos, social, money, subscription, other)	Username or email	Has money, photos or records?	Costs money? How much?	Deadline	Decision (memorialize, delete, leave, claim, cancel)	Request sent (date, reference)	Done (date)

Accounts (continued)

Company or service	Type (email, photos, social, money, subscription, other)	Username or email	Has money, photos or records?	Costs money? How much?	Deadline	Decision (memorialize, delete, leave, claim, cancel)	Request sent (date, reference)	Done (date)

TEMPLATE C

Provider quick-reference table

This table sums up the official processes in this book. Always check the company's page before you start, because processes change.

Provider	What's possible	What you need	Where to start	Last verified
Apple (Legacy Contact)	Access to most iCloud data, not passwords or purchases. Access lasts 3 years from approval, then the account is deleted	Access key and death certificate	digital-legacy.apple.com (theirdigitallife.com/go/u136) (Chapter 6)	November 2026
Apple (no Legacy Contact)	iCloud data (not end-to-end encrypted data), some help with Activation Lock (ask for these before any closure); account deletion	A US court order with Apple's required wording	Apple Support (1-800-275-2273) at getsupport.apple.com (theirdigitallife.com/go/u137); deletion at digital-legacy-account.apple.com (theirdigitallife.com/go/u138) (Chapter 6)	November 2026
Google (incl. Gmail, YouTube)	Close account; ask for funds; ask for data (case by case)	Death certificate, your ID; for data, possibly more	Google: Submit a request regarding a deceased user's account (theirdigitallife.com/go/u16) (Chapter 11)	November 2026
Google (their plan)	Data shared with trusted contacts after inactivity	Set up by them before death	Inactive Account Manager (theirdigitallife.com/go/u20)	November 2026
Google Workspace (business)	Recover admin access by proving control of the domain	Authority over the business; access to the domain's settings	Recovering administrator access (theirdigitallife.com/go/u131) (Chapter 19)	November 2026

Provider	What's possible	What you need	Where to start	Last verified
Microsoft (Outlook, Hotmail, OneDrive, Xbox)	No family closure form; the account closes by itself. Email and OneDrive frozen after 1 year without use, deleted "shortly after". Data only with a subpoena or court order	A subpoena or court order served on Microsoft's registered agent	Microsoft: When someone has died (theirdigitallife.com/go/u18) (Chapter 11)	November 2026
Yahoo	US accounts: closure, or content with a US court order	US death certificate; your ID and a US court order for content	Yahoo help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u86) (Chapter 11)	November 2026
Xfinity (Comcast)	Close the service or change it into your name; no early termination fee	Account Change Request: "Customer has passed away"	Xfinity help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u87) (Chapters 11, 14)	November 2026
WhatsApp	Export chats from an unlocked phone. Accounts deleted after 120 days without use	The unlocked phone	WhatsApp: Export chat history (theirdigitallife.com/go/u93) (Chapter 13)	November 2026
Samsung	Smart Switch backup to a Windows computer or Mac, if you know the code	The unlocked phone	Samsung: Back up and restore data on your Galaxy (theirdigitallife.com/go/u162) (Chapter 7)	November 2026
Facebook	Memorialize; remove; content only with a court order	Proof of death; for removal, death certificate or proof of authority	Memorialization request (theirdigitallife.com/go/u109) (Chapter 16)	November 2026
Instagram	Memorialize; remove	Proof of death; for removal, birth or death certificate or proof of authority	Instagram help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u112) (Chapter 16)	November 2026
X	Deactivate only	Death certificate, your ID	X help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u113) (Chapter 16)	November 2026
LinkedIn	Memorialize; close	For closure, letters testamentary or letters of administration	LinkedIn help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u114) (Chapter 16)	November 2026

Provider	What's possible	What you need	Where to start	Last verified
TikTok	News reports describe legacy settings; no official family page found	Ask through the app or TikTok support	TikTok Support (theirdigitallife.com/go/u115) (Chapter 16)	November 2026
Discord	Deletion only; no access or data	Death certificate or medical examiner's or coroner's report, proof of relationship, your photo ID	Discord help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u116) (Chapter 16)	November 2026
Snapchat	No access; requests only from a verified email linked to the account	Access to their email	Snapchat help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u117) (Chapter 16)	November 2026
Dropbox	Access with a court order	Court order and documents	Dropbox help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u90) (Chapter 12)	November 2026
Bitwarden	Emergency access, if they set it up	Your own Bitwarden account	Bitwarden: Emergency access (theirdigitallife.com/go/u101) (Chapter 15)	November 2026
1Password	Emergency Kit; family organizer recovery	Kit, or organizer access	1Password: Recovery (theirdigitallife.com/go/u104) (Chapter 15)	November 2026
LastPass	Emergency access, if they set it up	Your own LastPass account	LastPass: Emergency access (theirdigitallife.com/go/u105) (Chapter 15)	November 2026
Keeper	Read-only emergency access, if they set it up	Your own Keeper account	Keeper: Emergency access (theirdigitallife.com/go/u106) (Chapter 15)	November 2026
Proton	Emergency access on paid plans, if they set it up	Your own Proton account	Proton: Emergency access (theirdigitallife.com/go/u107) (Chapter 15)	November 2026
Verizon	Transfer to an account member, or executor request; device balance forgiven if returned	Death certificate, executor papers	Verizon: Deceased account handling (theirdigitallife.com/go/u4), 800-922-0204 (Chapter 14)	November 2026

Provider	What's possible	What you need	Where to start	Last verified
AT&T	Transfer of billing responsibility, cancel or port out; no early termination fee	Account details; without passcode, last 4 of SSN plus death certificate, obituary or accident report	AT&T help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u5), 800.331.0500 (Chapter 14)	November 2026
T-Mobile	Cancel or change ownership; voicemails and greetings deleted	Owner's name, number, date of birth	T-Mobile: Close or change ownership (theirdigitallife.com/go/u97) (Chapter 14)	November 2026
PayPal	Close and pay out to the estate	Death certificate, your ID, executor papers or will, estate W-9	PayPal US help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u124) (Chapter 18)	November 2026
American Airlines AAdvantage	One-time discretionary credit of miles; ask within 1 year	Declaration, death certificate, legal authority, fees	AAdvantage terms (theirdigitallife.com/go/u33) (Chapter 18)	November 2026
Delta SkyMiles	Miles not transferable on death		Delta member guide (theirdigitallife.com/go/u164) (Chapter 18)	November 2026
Coinbase	Access for the estate	Death certificate, probate papers or small estate affidavit, ID, signed instruction letter	Coinbase help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u126) (Chapter 18)	November 2026
Social Security and Medicare	Report the death (usually done by the funeral home); survivor benefits; $255 payment	Name, SSN, dates of birth and death	SSA: When someone dies (theirdigitallife.com/go/u43), 1-800-772-1213 (Chapter 4)	November 2026
IRS	Final return, Form 56, Form 1310 for refunds	Personal representative's details	IRS: Final returns of a deceased person (theirdigitallife.com/go/u49) (Chapter 4)	November 2026
Credit bureaus	"Deceased" notice; one bureau tells the others	Death certificate, your ID, proof of authority	Equifax (theirdigitallife.com/go/u45) (Chapter 4)	November 2026
USPS	Forward mail to the executor	Proof you're the appointed executor, at a Post Office	USPS: Mail for the deceased (theirdigitallife.com/go/u53) (Chapter 5)	November 2026

Provider	What's possible	What you need	Where to start	Last verified
Unclaimed property	Free search in every state	Their name	MissingMoney / NAUPA (theirdigitallife.com/go/u128) (Chapter 18)	November 2026
Amazon (incl. Kindle, Prime, Audible)	Stop subscriptions and deliveries; close the account. Kindle and other purchases can't be moved	Death certificate and the account's email or phone; to close, also proof of authority and your photo ID	Amazon help: Bereavement support (Chapter 17)	November 2026
Banks	Statements; close accounts; pay the money to the estate. Joint accounts depend on how they were held	Death certificate; for account details, letters testamentary or letters of administration	Search the bank's website for "estate services"; CFPB joint-account page (Chapter 18)	November 2026
Phone company complaints	Complain if a phone company won't help	Account details, dates and reference numbers	USAGov: Where to file phone company complaints (Chapter 14)	November 2026

TEMPLATE D

Letter templates

Use these when a company has no online form, or asks for a letter. Fill in the parts in [square brackets]. Attach copies, never originals, of documents. Keep a copy of everything you send.

Before you write: what to say on the phone

Most families phone before they write. This short script works for most companies. Fill in the parts in square brackets.

> "Hello. I'm calling because [their full name] has died. They had an account with you: [account number, email or phone number]. I'm [the executor / administrator / their next of kin]. I'd like to [close the account / transfer it into my name / ask for a copy of their data / stop a subscription]. Could you tell me what documents you need, and how to send them? Could I have a reference number, and your name, please?"

Before you hang up, write down the date, the person's name, the reference number and what they asked for (Template B or Template I).

D1. Request for data or a copy of content

[Your name]
[Your address]
[Your email and phone]
[Date]

[Company name]
[Address or email from the company's help page]

Re: Request for a copy of the account data of [their full name], deceased

Account: [email address, username or account number]
Date of death: [date]

I am the [executor / administrator / personal representative] of the estate of [their full name], who died on [date].

I ask for [a catalogue of the account / a copy of the following content]: [for example, photos and videos]. I ask for it to administer the estate. I make this request under [your state's] version of the Revised Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act, where it applies.

I attach:

- a certified copy of the death certificate
- a certified copy of the [letters testamentary / letters of administration / small estate affidavit / court order]
- a copy of the will, or other record showing their consent, if relevant
- a copy of my photo ID

Please tell me if you need anything else, or if your process requires a court order.

Sincerely, [Signature]
[Your name]

D2. Account closure

Re: Closure of the account of [their full name], deceased

Account: [account details]
Date of death: [date]

I am the [executor / administrator / next of kin] of [their full name], who died on [date]. Please close this account.

Please also:

- stop all charges from the date of death
- refund any charges made after [date of death] to [the estate account / the original card]
- pay any credit or balance to the estate
- confirm the closure to me in writing

I attach [the death certificate and proof of my authority].

Sincerely, [Signature]
[Your name]

D3. Memorialization request

Re: Request to memorialize the account of [their full name]

Profile link: [link]
Date of death: [date]

I am [your relationship to them, for example their daughter]. [Their full name] died on [date]. I ask that the account be memorialized.

Proof of death: [link to an online obituary, or attached death certificate].

Thank you for your help.

[Your name]

D4. Phone company: transfer of a phone number

Re: Transfer of wireless line [number] — account holder deceased

Account number: [number]
Account holder: [their full name]
Date of death: [date]

I am the [executor / administrator / account member] of [their full name]. Please:

- keep the line active while the estate is being settled, and not cancel it
- transfer the line and number into the name of [new owner's name]
- keep the voicemail box until [date], if possible, so the family can save messages
- add a port-out PIN or note to the account so the number cannot be moved without my authority
- waive any early termination fee for the deceased's line

I attach [the death certificate, proof of my authority, and the new owner's ID if required].

Sincerely, [Signature]
[Your name and phone number]

TEMPLATE E

Executor's letter of authority

IMPORTANT

This is a simple example letter, not a legal document. It doesn't replace letters testamentary, letters of administration or a small estate affidavit, and most companies will still ask for those. If you're unsure whether it suits your situation, ask legal aid, your bar's referral service or an estate attorney (Template H).

Letter of authority

I, [executor's full name], of [address], am the [executor / administrator / personal representative] of the estate of [their full name], late of [address], who died on [date]. I was appointed by the [name of court] of [county], [state] on [date], case number [number].

I authorize [helper's full name], of [address], to act on my behalf to:

- [contact [company names] about the deceased's accounts]
- [submit memorialization, closure or data requests]
- [collect copies of data on my behalf]

This authority does not allow [helper's name] to sign in to any account as the deceased, to move money, or to make decisions about the estate without my written approval.

This authority ends on [date], or earlier if I cancel it in writing.

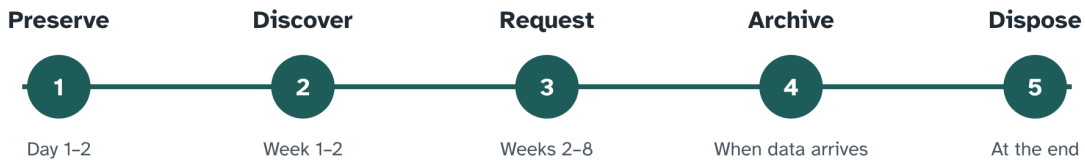
Signed: _____
Date: _____
[Executor's full name]

[Notary acknowledgment, if your attorney advises one]

TEMPLATE F

Tech helper runbook

For the family member or friend who's good with computers. Work through this with the executor.



Tech helper runbook at a glance

Day 1–2: Preserve

1. Collect all devices. Label each with a number. Record make, model and serial number in Template B.
2. Keep phones and tablets powered on and charging. Don't power cycle. Recent iPhones restart themselves after about 72 hours locked, which makes it harder to work with.
3. If a device is unlocked, extend auto-lock or screen timeout. Turn off Low Power Mode on iPhone (it forces a 30-second auto-lock).
4. Don't attempt passcodes. Don't connect devices to unfamiliar computers or tools.
5. Keep the phone number active (Chapter 14).
6. Record carrier voicemail messages and the greeting. T-Mobile and AT&T delete voicemails on transfer (Chapter 13).

Week 1–2: Discover

1. With the executor, check for written passcodes, a password manager Emergency Kit, or legacy contact access keys.
2. List accounts from paper records, bank statements, the credit report, tax transcripts and any device you can lawfully open.

3. List authenticator apps and the services in them.
4. Note deadlines (Chapter 2 has the full table): carrier voicemail (days); Social Security payment for the month of death (return it); prepaid numbers (Verizon and AT&T 60 days, T-Mobile 120 days); WhatsApp (120 days); iCloud backup (may be deleted 180 days after the last backup); Samsung Cloud (deleted after 12 months unused); Dropbox Basic (may be closed after 12 months inactive); Microsoft email and OneDrive (frozen after 1 year); AAdvantage (ask within 1 year); final tax return (April 15 of the next year); Google (2 years); Apple Legacy Contact access (3 years from approval).

Weeks 2–8: Request

1. Submit official requests using Template C and Template D. Record dates and reference numbers.
2. Apple: Legacy Contact (access key + death certificate; download everything within 3 years), or a US court order with Apple's wording, or deletion. An approved Legacy Contact request removes Activation Lock automatically. With a deletion, ask Apple to remove it from each device (Chapter 6). Move anyone sharing the Apple Account to their own account first.
3. Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, Meta and others: follow Chapters 7, 8, 11, 12 and 16. Ask the estate attorney early about court orders for content (Microsoft's clock is about a year).
4. Business systems: check domain expiry and admin access first (Chapter 19).

When data arrives: Archive

1. Copy everything to one external drive. Verify files open.
2. Make three copies on two kinds of storage, one off-site (Chapter 21).
3. Encrypt any drive with private documents.

At the end: Dispose

1. Confirm with the executor that nothing more is needed from each device.
2. Sign out and erase, or confirm Activation Lock or device protection has been removed (Chapter 22).
3. Recycle through a manufacturer, carrier or retailer program, or Call2Recycle. Keep records for the executor.

Never

- guess passcodes, use unlock tools, or jailbreak or root a device
- sign in to their accounts as them
- use their face or finger to unlock a device
- move money from their accounts
- delete anything before it's been saved and the executor agrees

TEMPLATE G

Glossary

Access key: a code Apple gives when someone picks a Legacy Contact. The Legacy Contact needs it to ask for access.

Activation Lock: an Apple feature that keeps a device linked to its owner's Apple Account, even after it's erased.

Administrator: the person a court appoints to look after an estate when there's no will.

Authenticator app: an app that shows sign-in codes that change every 30 seconds.

Automatic payment: a company taking money straight from a bank account on a regular date (also called autopay or ACH debit).

Auto-Lock: the iPhone setting for how soon the screen locks.

Backup: a copy of a device's data, kept somewhere else.

Catalogue (RUFADAA): a list of who someone emailed or messaged, and when, without the contents.

Certified copy: an official copy of a document, such as a death certificate, issued by the office that keeps it.

Cloud: storage on a company's computers, reached over the internet, such as iCloud or Google Drive.

Credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion, the companies that keep credit reports.

Death certificate: the official record of a death, from the state or county vital records office.

Device protection (Android): also called Factory Reset Protection. A reset phone needs the previous Google Account before it can be used.

Domain name: a website address, such as example.com.

Durable power of attorney: authority to act for someone while they're alive, even if they can't. It ends when they die.

EIN: Employer Identification Number, a tax ID number for a business or an estate.

Eject: telling a computer you're about to unplug a drive, so nothing is lost.

Emergency access: a password manager feature that lets a chosen person open the vault after a waiting time.

Emergency Kit: a printed page from 1Password with the details needed to open an account.

Encrypted backup: a backup locked with a password.

Encryption: scrambling data so only someone with the key can read it.

Estate: everything a person owned when they died.

Estate attorney: a lawyer who handles wills, probate and estates.

Executor: the person named in a will to look after the estate.

FileVault: the Mac feature that encrypts its storage.

Find My: Apple's app for locating, and erasing, a lost device.

Google Takeout: Google's tool for downloading a copy of an account's data.

ICANN Lookup: a free tool that shows which registrar a website address is with.

Inactive Account Manager: a Google setting that shares data with chosen people if an account isn't used for a while.

Legacy contact: a person chosen to look after an account after death. Apple and Facebook both use this term, in different ways.

Letters of administration: a court paper appointing an administrator when there's no valid will.

Letters testamentary: a court paper confirming the executor can act under the will.

License (digital purchases): permission to use music, movies, books, games or apps. It usually can't be passed on.

LLC: limited liability company, a kind of business that is separate from its owners.

Memorialize: turn a social media profile into a memorial that nobody can sign in to.

Next of kin: the closest family member, such as a spouse or child.

Number aging: the waiting period after a phone number is canceled, before it can go to someone else.

Passkey: a newer way to sign in without a password.

Password manager: an app that stores passwords behind one main password.

Payable on death (POD) / transfer on death (TOD): a named beneficiary on an account, who gets it outside probate.

Personal representative: the general legal name for the executor or administrator.

Prepaid: a phone service paid in advance.

Probate: the court process that confirms the will and the executor, and oversees the estate.

QR code: a square barcode a phone camera can read.

Recovery key (BitLocker, FileVault): a long code that unlocks an encrypted computer's storage.

Recovery phrase: a list of 12 or 24 words that unlocks a cryptocurrency wallet.

RUFADAA: the Revised Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act, the digital assets law most states have passed in some form.

SIM card / eSIM: the card or built-in chip that links a phone to a phone number.

Small estate affidavit: a signed form that lets family collect a small estate without full probate. Each state sets its own limits.

Smart Switch: Samsung's free program for backing up and moving phone data.

Sole proprietor: someone who runs a business in their own name, not through a company.

Subpoena: a court document ordering someone to hand over information.

Super administrator: the main manager of a Google Workspace business account.

Sync: keeping copies on a device and online matched automatically.

Tech helper: the family member or friend who handles the technical steps.

Terabyte: a measure of storage. One holds roughly 250,000 phone photos.

Transfer of billing responsibility: AT&T's name for moving a phone line into someone else's name.

Two-step login: a second check when signing in, usually a code sent by text or shown in an app. Also called two-factor authentication, or 2FA.

Unclaimed property: forgotten money, such as old bank accounts or refunds, held by a state.

Vault: the locked, private store inside a password manager.

TEMPLATE H

Where to get help

This book's website: theirdigitallife.com has the updates page, free printable copies of these templates, and a way to tell us about a step that has changed.

If you need to talk to someone now

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** call or text **988**, or chat at 988lifeline.org. Free and confidential, 24/7. For Spanish, press 2 or text AYUDA to 988. Deaf and hard of hearing people can use a videophone.
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** call 988 and press 1, or text **838255**. 24/7.
- **Crisis Text Line:** text **HOME** to **741741**. Free, 24/7.
- **The Compassionate Friends (death of a child of any age):** (877) 969-0010, or find a local chapter on its website.
- In an emergency, call **911**.

Government

- **Social Security** (and Medicare): 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. See SSA: When someone dies (theirdigitallife.com/go/u43).
- **USAGov:** list of agencies to tell at usa.gov/report-a-death (theirdigitallife.com/go/u42), or 1-844-USAGOV1 (1-844-872-4681).
- **IRS:** File the final income tax returns of a deceased person (theirdigitallife.com/go/u49). Publication 559 explains an executor's tax duties.
- **USPS:** Mail for the deceased (theirdigitallife.com/go/u53).
- **Unclaimed property:** MissingMoney.com (theirdigitallife.com/go/u128), through NAUPA. Free.
- **Your state or county vital records office:** for certified death certificates.

Credit bureaus

- **Equifax:** 888-378-4329. Mail: Equifax Information Services LLC, P.O. Box 105139, Atlanta, GA 30348-5139.
- **Experian:** 888-397-3742. Upload at experian.com/upload, or mail P.O. Box 4500, Allen, TX 75013.
- **TransUnion:** 800-916-8800. Mail: P.O. Box 2000, Chester, PA 19016.

Estates and legal help

- **An estate attorney.** Your state or local bar association runs a lawyer referral service. Search for "[your state] bar lawyer referral".
- **Legal aid.** If money is tight, your local legal aid office may help with probate questions for free. Find one at LawHelp.org (theirdigitallife.com/go/u149) or through the Legal Services Corporation (theirdigitallife.com/go/u165). These services are for people with low to moderate incomes.
- **Free online answers.** ABA Free Legal Answers (theirdigitallife.com/go/u151) lets people with low incomes ask a volunteer lawyer a question online.
- **The probate court clerk** in the county where the person lived can explain forms and small estate rules (but can't give legal advice).

Complaints, scams and identity theft

- **Federal Trade Commission:** report identity theft at IdentityTheft.gov (theirdigitallife.com/go/u139), and fraud at ReportFraud.ftc.gov (theirdigitallife.com/go/u140), or call 1-877-382-4357.
- **FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center:** ic3.gov (theirdigitallife.com/go/u141), for online scams.
- **Phone company complaints:** your state government, or the FCC's online form at consumercomplaints.fcc.gov (theirdigitallife.com/go/u142).
- **Child sexual abuse material:** NCMEC CyberTipline, report.cybertip.org (theirdigitallife.com/go/u143) or 1-800-843-5678, 24 hours.

> **Sources:** 988 Lifeline: Get help (theirdigitallife.com/go/u23). Veterans Crisis Line (theirdigitallife.com/go/u166). Crisis Text Line (theirdigitallife.com/go/u145). The Compassionate Friends (theirdigitallife.com/go/u25). NCMEC: CyberTipline (theirdigitallife.com/go/u24). FTC: Report identity theft (theirdigitallife.com/go/u84). USAGov: Imposter scams (theirdigitallife.com/go/u82). USAGov: Where to file phone company complaints (theirdigitallife.com/go/u98). Experian: Can an executor get a deceased person's credit report? (theirdigitallife.com/go/u47).
> **Last verified: November 2026.**

TEMPLATE I

Access log

Use this to record each time someone uses a device or account, or contacts a company. If anyone ever questions what was done, this protects you and the executor. Photocopy this page as needed, or print more from theirdigitallife.com/templates.

Date	Who	Device, account or company	What was done	Who agreed (executor)	Reference number	Next step
e.g. March 3	*Sam (tech helper)*	*Dad's iPhone*	*Encrypted backup to Sam's laptop*	*Jo (executor)*		*Copy photos to the family drive*