



EXECUTOR'S CRYPTOCURRENCY GUIDE

A practical first-steps checklist for personal representatives and families | Estate administration • Asset security • Scam prevention

START HERE: Preserve assets first. Do not move cryptocurrency, enter a recovery phrase, sell holdings, or respond to unsolicited “recovery” offers before confirming legal authority and obtaining appropriate technical guidance.

1 | Confirm authority and assemble estate documents

- ☐ Contact the estate attorney and confirm who has authority to act (executor/personal representative, trustee, or other fiduciary).
- ☐ Obtain the death certificate, will or trust, court-issued letters or orders where applicable, and identification required by custodians.
- ☐ Review any digital-asset instructions and designated-recipient tools; ask counsel about limits in account terms and applicable law.

2 | Secure devices and preserve evidence

- ☐ Safeguard phones, laptops, hardware wallets, paper records, and backup devices. Keep items in a controlled, documented location.
- ☐ Preserve original documents, email records, exchange statements, tax returns, and transaction exports. Record who handled each item.
- ☐ Do not reset devices, delete apps, factory-reset a hardware wallet, or repeatedly guess PINs/passwords; these actions can destroy access.
- ☐ Do not photograph, email, text, or upload private keys or wallet recovery/seed phrases to unknown individuals or websites.

3 | Build an initial asset inventory

- ☐ Look for exchange accounts, custodial platforms, self-custody wallets, hardware wallets, stablecoins, NFTs, staking and DeFi positions.
- ☐ Use tax returns, bank statements, purchase confirmations, emails and prior inventory worksheets to identify possible holdings.
- ☐ Record publicly shareable wallet addresses, blockchain networks, platform names, estimated balances and where records are stored.

Inventory note: A public wallet address can help identify on-chain activity; it does not by itself establish ownership or provide access.



ACCESS, VERIFICATION & SAFE TRANSFERS

Never treat possession of a device or password as permission to bypass legal or platform procedures.

4 | Request access through official exchange channels

- ☐ Contact exchanges and custodians only through independently verified official websites or support channels.
- ☐ Ask each provider about its deceased-account process, identity requirements, holdings statements, and permitted transfer or liquidation methods.
- ☐ Maintain copies of submitted documents, support case numbers, instructions and responses; avoid logging in as the deceased person.

Example: Coinbase publishes an estate process that may request a death certificate, probate documents, identification and transfer instructions. Other providers have different requirements.

5 | Evaluate self-custody access carefully

- ☐ For hardware or software wallets, document the device/wallet type, blockchain networks, available public addresses and location of access instructions.
- ☐ Have a qualified professional and the estate attorney determine a secure, authorized access method before attempting recovery or transactions.
- ☐ Never enter a seed phrase on a site or into software suggested by a stranger, a search ad, a direct message or an unverified "support agent."

6 | Prevent irreversible transfer mistakes

- ☐ Confirm the recipient and who legally receives the asset; obtain attorney/tax guidance before selling, swapping or distributing.
- ☐ Independently verify destination address, network, asset/token contract, and any memo/tag. Be alert to address-poisoning scams.
- ☐ For meaningful transfers, use a documented dual-review process and an appropriately sized test transfer when technically feasible.
- ☐ Understand network fees, exchange restrictions, custody of signing devices, and the tax/reporting implications of each action.

STOP AND VERIFY: Crypto transfers are generally irreversible. If anyone insists on urgency, secrecy, an upfront "release fee," or a seed phrase to unlock an inheritance, stop and independently verify the request.

Common estate-related scam warning signs

Unsolicited "wallet recovery" specialists • Fake exchange support calls • Requests for passwords, PINs or seed phrases • Upfront crypto payments to release funds • "Guaranteed" recovery claims • Fake investment dashboards • Wallet-draining signature requests • Lookalike websites and QR codes



DOCUMENTATION & ESTATE CLOSEOUT

Keep a reproducible record of what existed, what happened, and how beneficiaries received the assets.

7 | Capture valuations and cost-basis evidence

- ☐ Document asset quantities and the date-of-death value, including pricing source, timestamp, time zone, and valuation method.
- ☐ Collect original acquisition dates, purchase amounts, trading fees, transfers between wallets, income, staking and DeFi activity.
- ☐ Retain exchange CSV files, transaction hashes, wallet histories, screenshots, statements, and prior-year tax workpapers.
- ☐ Consult a qualified tax professional: inherited property generally has a basis related to fair market value at death, subject to exceptions; prior transactions and post-death events may be taxable.

8 | Track transfers, distributions and unresolved assets

- ☐ Record each transaction hash, asset, network, sending and receiving address, quantity, fee, date/time and approval.
- ☐ Keep beneficiary acknowledgments, estate accounting records, reconciliation schedules and relevant tax filings.
- ☐ Identify unresolved accounts, lost-access wallets, possible additional holdings and any follow-up investigation needed.

Estate working notes

Attorney / firm: _____

Authorized personal representative: _____

Digital-asset inventory location: _____

Custodian case numbers / unresolved matters: _____

Tax professional / valuation date: _____

Further information

Texas legal framework: Texas Estates Code, Chapter 2001 (fiduciary access to digital assets). statutes.capitol.texas.gov

Exchange process example: [Coinbase deceased-account guidance](#)

Tax reference: [IRS digital asset FAQs](#) and [Publication 551, Basis of Assets](#)

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Educational support, wallet identification and blockchain transaction documentation. No legal, tax, investment or estate-planning advice.