

In administering an estate the Public Guardian and Trustee provides expert, impartial, and professional service. Each estate is handled in accordance with established policies and procedures, including strict controls over how assets are secured, evaluated and disposed of and how estate funds are invested. Money held by the Public Guardian and Trustee while administering an estate earns interest. The Public Guardian and Trustee charges fees for administering an estate, set by regulation.

Additional information about the Estate and Personal Trust Services offered by the Public Guardian and Trustee can be found on our website - www.trustee.bc.ca. Specific information about administration fees is provided under the heading "Legislation and Fees".

If you would like more information about the **Estate Administration Services** offered by the Public Guardian and Trustee, **please call 604.660.4444 and ask to speak to an Estate Administrator** or email us at estates@trustee.bc.ca. Outside the Lower Mainland call Enquiry BC at **1.800.663.7867** and ask to be put through to the **Public Guardian and Trustee** at **604.660.4444**.



This information is provided as a public service by the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia. The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia is not providing legal or other professional advice.

Estate Administration Services



administer the estate. The Public Guardian and Trustee will not usually administer estates with assets less than \$5,000 as this is neither practical nor cost effective.

Administering an estate can be a lengthy process with many steps. These include:

- making funeral arrangements
- identifying, securing and dealing with assets
- obtaining Letters Probate (where there is a will) or Letters of Administration from the Court
- identifying and paying valid debts and claims against the estate
- filing tax returns
- dealing with any legal issues that arise
- identifying, locating and distributing the balance of the estate to the rightful heirs and/or beneficiaries.

With a Will

When a person dies and leaves a Will, it is the responsibility of the executor named in the Will, usually a relative, friend or other trusted person, to handle funeral arrangements and administer the estate. If the executor cannot act and there is no one else (an alternate executor or a beneficiary) willing and able to administer the estate, the Public Guardian and Trustee may provide this service. The Public Guardian and Trustee can also be named as the executor in a Will. In either case, the estate is administered and distributed according to the instructions set out in the Will.

Without a Will

When a person dies without a Will, the *Estate Administration Act* establishes the people who have a right to administer the estate.

In order of priority they are:

- Spouses, providing the spouse has not lived separate and apart from the deceased person for more than one year immediately before death, and includes a common law spouse (including a same gender spouse), providing the common law spouse has lived with the deceased person in a marriage-like relationship for a period of at least 2 years immediately before death
- children, grandchildren (or a guardian on their behalf)
- parents
- siblings and children of predeceased siblings
- nieces and nephews
- next of kin of equal degree of relationship.

Administering an Estate

Any one of the heirs to an estate can administer the estate with the consent of the other heirs. If there are no next of kin willing and able to handle this responsibility then the Public Guardian and Trustee as Official Administrator for BC may