



ESTATE TAX RETURN INFORMATION REQUEST CHECKLIST

What follows is a partial listing of information that may be needed to complete an Estate Tax Return for a decedent. Some of the items listed will be inapplicable to some Estates while in other Estates there would be additional information that will be required. This list has been designed to use only as a guide in assisting those involved in the estate tax preparation process in generating the appropriate information. Experiences in this area indicate that the information requested may give rise to other questions which will require additional data later.

- Certified copy of Death Certificate.
- Certified copy of Last Will and Testament.
- Copy of Letter of Testamentary.
- If a revocable trust was used which became part of the estate planning process, then a copy of the Trust document.
- Did decedent have any General or Limited Powers of Appointment?
- Copies of any and all trusts established by the decedent during lifetime.
- Copies of each gift tax return filed by decedent.
- Determine whether or not the decedent made any gifts, taxable or otherwise, during the year of death which would have not been reported on a prior year gift tax return.
- Copies of the last three years individual income tax return filed by decedent.
- Names, addresses, and social security numbers of Executors.
- Names, addresses, and social security numbers of Beneficiaries.
- If a widow or widower, the date of death and name of the prior deceased spouse.
- Occupation of decedent during life, if retired, occupation prior to retirement.
- If a safety deposit box was held in the name of decedent, the name of the institution, address and box number.
- Real estate appraisals on all real estate held by decedent whether held outright or as tenants in common, etc. with another individual. If real estate was held as tenants in common then we will need to know the percentage ownership, and name and address of the co-tenant. If joint tenant with survivorship then this should also be ascertained. Appraisals of real estate generally are formal appraisals.
- Copies of all bank statements for the year of death until closed for any bank account, including certificates of deposit, money market funds, etc. which were held either in the name of the decedent outright or as a co-tenant with some other individual.
- Copies of all brokerage statements in the name of decedent or in joint name of decedent and others for the year of death until closed.
- If marketable securities are held outside of brokerage firms, i.e., in safe deposit box or other locations, a listing in which it would include the name of the security, the number of shares and cusip number. Preferably, we would like to have a copy of the security itself.
- Form 712 on any life insurance policy which covered the life of the decedent regardless of whether or not that policy was payable to the Estate. This would include policies held

by life insurance trusts, group health policies, policies held by spouses and payable to them, policies payable to the Estate and even policies that would be payable to charities. Form 712 can be obtained by contacting the agent who sold the policy or managed it or the insurance company distribution office.

- Information regarding individual retirement accounts, participant accounts in qualified retirement plans, Roth IRA's, etc. Information needed would include the name of the account, account number, the type of account, copies of monthly or quarterly statements representing the contents and value of the account for the month of death and the preceding month and information regarding who the beneficiary of the account is.
- If the decedent is a widow or widower, information as to whether the prior death established a marital trust and, if so, information on that trust to include name of the trustee and telephone number, etc.
- Information regarding tangible personal property held by decedent to include furniture, clothing, jewelry, collectible items, etc. Determine whether or not decedent maintained a personal articles floater policy covering specific items and, if so, obtain a copy of that policy. Many of these items may require appraisals.
- A description of automobiles owned by the decedent.
- Copies of any outstanding notes receivable by the decedent representing advances the decedent may have made to others prior to death and which remain unpaid at death.
- Determine whether or not decedent or was a shareholder or partner in any non-public entity, including Family Limited Partnership. If so, determine who the contact person would be to obtain information on that entity. Information to be obtained would include, at a minimum, the name of the entity, J.D. number, tax year end, type of entity, percentage ownership by decedent, copies of financial statements and tax returns for five prior years and the year of death. If there was a buy-sell agreement in place, a shareholder agreement, or an operating agreement then copies of those, as well. Finally, appraisals for these business interest may be required depending upon the circumstances. This can only be ascertained after reviewing the documentation noted.
- A detail listing of funeral expenses, to include travel expenses to attend funeral.
- A listing of administrative costs incurred to include appraisal costs, probate court cost and professional fees.
- A listing of any unpaid debts of the decedent which were unpaid as of the date of death and subsequently paid. These would include, at a minimum, final medical bills, household bills such as utility bills, credit card bills, etc. property tax bills on real estate held by the decedent, f unpaid prior to death, etc.
- If the decedent has any outstanding bank or other debts such as mortgage debts. etc. then information on those debts to include the name of the lender, account number, original balance, original principal amount, interest rate, monthly payment and unpaid balance as of the date of death.