



# Wills Explained

**WILL** A Will, or Last Will & Testament, is a document that expresses your wishes about how you want to distribute your property when you die.

**EXECUTOR** The executor is the person you name in your Will to carry out your wishes.

## Do I need a Will?

No. If you die without a Will, any property you own that does not have a named beneficiary will be distributed based on Ohio law. Generally, the law says your property goes to your closest family members. In a Will you can name exactly who you want to get each item of your property.

## Are there ways to avoid probate? Yes!



If you own **titled real estate**, you can sign a document naming the person or organization you would like to receive your real estate when you die. This document should be drafted by an attorney and recorded with the county recorder.



If you own a **titled vehicle**, you can go to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) and change your title to include the name of the person or organization you want to receive the vehicle when you die. All that person or organization needs to do to get the title in their name after your death, is take a certified copy of your death certificate to the BMV. There may be a fee.



If you have **bank accounts**, you can go to your bank and sign a document naming the person or organization you want to receive the balance of your accounts when you die. All that person or organization needs to do to get the balance of the account after your death, is take a certified copy of your death certificate to the bank.



If you have **stocks, bonds, annuities, life insurance policies**, etc., go to the company where you purchased the item and sign a document naming the person or organization you want to receive the item when you die. After your death, that person or organization should contact the company where you purchased the item for instructions.

## I have a Will. Now what?



### **STEP 1: Keep your Will in a safe place.**

You may wish to put your Will in a safe deposit box, a lock box with other important papers or deposit it with the Probate Court. There may be a small fee.



### **STEP 2: Tell your executor where your original Will is located.**

You may wish to give your executor a copy but the original will be needed upon your death.

## Can I make changes to my Will?

Yes. As long as you are competent, you can always make changes to your Will. You may wish to talk to an attorney.



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