

Letter of Last Instruction

What is the Letter of Last Instruction?

The letter of last instruction is somewhat similar to the letter of intent. This is a letter written by you outlining to your family, friends or attorney what to do immediately upon your death. It contains information that may need attention between the time you die and the reading of your letter of intent and your will. It is recommended that because this letter includes matters, which need immediate attention, you should draft a separate letter of instruction and a letter of intent.

Suggestions to be included in your letter are:

- Who should tell your son or daughter of your death and if they should attend the funeral.
- Who should care for your son or daughter immediately after your death, until letter of intent can be read. If they do not live with you include the addresses and phone number of where he or she lives.
- Your desired funeral arrangements (e.g., cost, location). If your funeral is prearranged list all of the necessary information.
- People to notify of your death and funeral along with names addresses and phone numbers
- Names of organizations or specific causes you would like to be listed for donations.
- Location of your important documents, especially your will and other important papers. Include names of people who may need to access to these documents. If they are in a safe deposit box list all of the necessary information so they may access these papers.
- Other last instructions you may have before the reading of the will or letter of intent.
- Name and address of your attorney whom you wish to handle your legal affairs.
- Once written have your attorney review your letter to make sure it does not contain information contrary to your other wishes.
- Leave a copy of this letter with several family members and your attorney. Write on the envelope it is to be read immediately upon your death.
- Sign the letter, however since it is not a legally binding it does not need to be notarized

Example Letter of Last Instruction

March 3, 2009

Dear Remaining family and friends,

If you are reading this letter, you are following my instructions and reading this immediately after my death. I hope that my passing was in a timely fashion and that those left behind do not overly grieve my being gone.

Please place an obituary in the local newspaper so that those who wish to can attend my funeral. I have also attached to this letter the names, addresses and telephone numbers of several out-of-town friends who I would like immediately notified of my death and the funeral arrangements.

I am concerned about the welfare of my two daughters. However, I am secure that the provisions made in my will are sufficient to care for them. My oldest daughter, Kate Smith is married and lives in Chicago. Her address and telephone number is attached to this letter. Of immediate concern is my daughter, Mary, who has mental retardation and, as of this date still lives with me, her only living parent. I have left information about Mary's care in a letter of intent, which is with my will.

I would like for Kate to tell Mary of my death. I have also arranged with Kate that Mary stay with her in the first few days after my death, and until the living arrangement which Mary and I agreed is best, can be completed. This is described in detail in my letter of intent.

I have pre-arranged and paid for my funeral which I would prefer Mary not attend. I would desire that no other arrangements be made and that anyone wishing to leave a donation/memorial make a donation to Mary's living fund or ARC.

My will and letter of intent and other important papers are with my attorney, Ellen Jones, of the law firm Jones, Smith and Brown of Greenville Ark. I desire that she handle all legal matter concerning my will and distribution of my estate.

Sincerely,

Joan Doan