The most carefully crafted estate plan may fall to pieces if family members, trustees, and executors and others do not understand what you have prepared and what their duties will be. A McKinney will attorney knows one of the best ways to avoid chaos and enable everyone to face the future with confidence is to hold an estate planning "fire drill."

Just like in the fire drills we remember from school, an estate planning fire drill gives everyone involved the opportunity to learn the proper procedures for handling a situation so that when the time comes, there is less stress and less likelihood of critical mistakes. Loved ones who might otherwise be paralyzed by grief will be better equipped to move forward and follow your wishes after your passing.

A McKinney Will Attorney Can Help Draft an Instruction Letter

Before schools hold fire drills, someone has to create a plan of action detailing where people are supposed to go and what they're supposed to do. In an estate planning fire drill, often the first step is to create a letter of instruction explaining in step-by-step terms what should happen after the planner's death.

It can be helpful to choose a preferred attorney to handle estate matters and review the letter of instruction with the attorney to ensure that all necessary procedures are covered. Then, it might be wise to review the letter and responsibilities with the executor and successor trustee before holding the actual drill with all family members.

What Happens During an Estate Planning Fire Drill?

When it is time to hold the actual drill, it is a good idea to assemble those affected, either in person or through a virtual online meeting platform or phone group. In addition to any executors and trustees named in a will or trust, it can be a good idea to include anyone who lives in a location where personal property and

documents are stored, anyone granted power of attorney, personal assistants, and other family members who may be affected.

It can be helpful to start the drill by explaining who has been placed in charge of certain tasks and the reasons for those choices. Then, assume that death has occurred and discuss the tasks that need to be covered as described in the instruction letter. Information to have on hand includes:

- “Calling tree” of family and friends to notify
- Contact information for professional advisors such as a McKinney will attorney, investment advisors, and accountants
- Legal documents such as copies of wills, trusts, powers of attorney, and healthcare directives
- Preferred plans for funeral/burial arrangements
- Passwords and codes
- Directions for distributing personal property that may not be designated in other documents
- A list of accounts and services that will need to be discontinued or transferred
- Location of any safes, safety deposit boxes, keys, etc.

While time is not as essential as it would be in a burning building, it is critical to handle tasks in the right order within a reasonable time frame.

Seek Assistance From a McKinney Will Attorney Today

Working with a professional who knows what to expect can make the process of contemplating and preparing for the end of life much less traumatic. Contact a dedicated McKinney will attorney at The Nordhaus Firm to learn how we can assist with any aspect of estate planning.