

ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE / HEALTH CARE POWER OF ATTORNEY

Original

- Original should NOT be locked up – it may be needed in an emergency
- Primary Agent can hold original, or should know where it is and how to access it

Copies

- Place your copy in your “Important Documents” folder. If you update the contact information on your originals, remember to also update your copies.
- Register it with *Virginia Advance Health Directive Registry* <http://www.connectvirginia.org/adr>
- Save a copy on your smart phone – you can either take a photo of each page, or you can email a copy to yourself
- Glove compartment of your vehicles (Couples – put copies of each in both cars folded in Ziploc bag or protective sleeve)
- Your Primary Care Physician may be willing to place one in your file
- Your backup agents, if you’ve named any

POWER OF ATTORNEY

Originals

- Have each Agent read and sign both copies of the Escrow Agreement Letters (you keep one and your agent keeps one of the signed letters)
- You can hold original, your primary agent should know where it is and how to access it
- Certification of Validity – (unsigned) keep with the original. If your agent needs to do anything for you using the power of attorney, he/she will likely need to sign a certification at that time.

Copies

- Place your copy in your “Important Documents” folder
- Place signed escrow letters in your “Important Documents” folder
- Your agents (or just the first page)

HOW LONG DO MY DOCUMENTS LAST?

When you die, the Powers of Attorney and the Advance Medical Directive die with you. Typically there is no set life-span for the other documents. I recommend reviewing the contents of your “Important Documents” folder at least once every year or two in order to insure that the documents continue to reflect your wishes in light of possible changes in your circumstances or in the law since the time you signed the documents. If you move to another state you should have your documents reviewed by a licensed attorney in your new state to make sure the documents comply with local laws. For your Will, if there is a significant change in your assets or beneficiaries, you should have your Will reviewed immediately.

IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO MAKE CHANGES TO MY DOCUMENTS?

No, you should not try and make changes to your documents yourself (except for updating the attached Schedule A’s which contain contact information). You should never attempt to change your Will by yourself, even though the change seems to be a "simple" one insofar as you are concerned. Unfortunately, there have been cases proving that (i) a layperson cannot reasonably expect to duplicate the work of a competent will lawyer, and (ii) when a will is not drawn correctly, the decedent's family often suffers for it (i.e., delay or excess cost in the settlement of the estate, or the loss of a part or all of an intended inheritance).