

## **The Pitfalls with DIY** **On-Line Wills and Trusts**

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Do it yourself on-line wills and trusts can actually be very dangerous to use because there are so many pitfalls something almost always goes wrong. If your DIY estate plan doesn't work as you intended the results could be catastrophic. Estate planning documents prepared without the counseling, advice and assistance of an experienced estate planning attorney, are often riddled with mistakes which can lead to unexpected and expensive consequences. Ambiguous and contradictory terms in an estate planning document that is not written to address changing tax laws or changes in your circumstances will leave your family and loved ones with the trouble of sorting it all out.

Even if nothing at all goes wrong, there are usually estate planning techniques and strategies that could have been employed and would have saved you and your beneficiaries time, money and heartache if properly utilized. If you're doing it yourself, it means you're not getting the advice you need to address unforeseen circumstances and make sure your estate plan properly reflects your wishes.

Many, if not all internet forms are sterile, generic and full of boiler plate language devoid of any meaningful instructions for loved ones. They offer basic "one size fits all" solutions to your own personal and unique situation. Everyone is different. A "fill-in-the-blank" approach to planning seldom reflects the hopes concerns, dreams values and ambitions of their makers. It is important for people to understand that there is a difference between a document, such as a will or a trust, and a comprehensive estate plan.

Many Internet forms are so generic and vague that they often fail to effectively grant the designated agent or trustee the necessary powers to properly manage and protect your assets. This can cause huge problems including prolonged delays and additional unnecessary costs. Furthermore, inadvertent mistakes can be made that can result in your loved ones ending up in court, fighting and spending thousands of dollars to fix the problem.

While some do-it-yourself wills and trusts may be touted as being as easy as "Click, Print and Sign" they often are modified by the user in such a way that they no longer accomplish the desired results. Having a will and a trust prepared by a skilled attorney as part of a comprehensive estate plan can be relatively inexpensive when compared to the damage and costs that can result from improperly drafted documents. An estate planning attorney should not be regarded as a glorified word processor because with proper estate planning you are not simply paying for a stack of documents, rather you are gaining his or her advice, expertise and counseling.

Estate planning is not only for when you pass, but for what happens if you become incapacitated. Don't leave your loved ones with a financial or legal hardship, much better to make things as easy as possible for your loved ones when they are helping you through a difficult illness or honoring your memory.

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*If you have any Estate Planning questions or would like a comprehensive review of your situation, risks, and potential solutions, feel free to get in touch. My contact information is listed below:*

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You can also schedule a 30 minute telephone call or Zoom conferencing call by clicking on the link to my [Calendar App](#) and selecting a time slot that is most convenient for you.