

## **16 Initial Steps to Securing a Deceased Estate Property**

For people who have lived alone, the family/ loved ones will need to do a few things to make sure the home and property is secure and clean so that it doesn't become a risk for breaking and entering and attracting pests. Although this time will be difficult as there will be funeral arranging and grieving, it is useful to do these few things at the home so it can wait a few weeks or longer, until people are ready to access the property again.



**The main aim is to make the property appear as though there has been no change and that there is someone still living at the property.**

- Remove all food from the property.
- Clean the fridge and turn it off (leave the doors open to air).
- Open the door of the dishwasher and
- Put a 'No Junk Mail' Sticker on the mailbox if there is not one already to reduce the bulk in the mailbox. In time a mail redirect can be set up but for now, just make sure you are able to get all the important mail and make it seem as though the mailbox is being emptied regularly.
- Cancel or hold any newspapers being delivered.
- Check all the windows and doors to make sure they are locked and that you have a key that can be used to unlock it.
- Make sure you have 2 sets of keys available as you will need to leave sets with contractors over time so it's best to have a backup set. Also it is good to give 2 sets to the real estate agent if/when the home goes to sale.
- Check all sheds and garages to make sure they are all locked as well.
- Take the time to photograph the contents of the property including sheds (especially if you live a long way away) so you can prompt your memory if you need. Photograph inside each drawer and cupboard as well.
- If you are the intended Executor of the Will and know the whereabouts of the Title of the property or any other documents that might be of use or will need to be stored safely, it might be a good time to collect them.
- Unplug all appliances in the home.

- Put the car into the garage if there is one and make sure it is locked.
  
- Turn off services to the home such as electricity, water and gas. I am referring to the mains to the property rather than the cancellation of the service. Having these services turned off, means you will not get any further accounts for the services and no excessive bills if there is a leak which goes undetected.  
**However, if you think it is important to keep the retic running so that the house remains looking lived in, then that might be your preferred option.**
  
- Maintain the normal gardening services if possible or commence a monthly mow if required.
  
- Maintain other necessary services such as pool cleaning if possible so that there is not a large and probably more costly job to do before going to sale.
  
- I also suggest having a look around the property and noting down what might be required to get the house ready for sale. Does it need a carpet clean, painting, some repairs, garden tidy? See the list below. If you are unsure of what the minimum requirements are, check with a real estate agent as they will advise you on what you need to have done to sell and how to get the best price for the home.

### **Items to Consider at the Property**

**Inside:**

- Carpet Cleaning
- Painting
- General repairs

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Appliance repairs

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- Window Cleaning
  - Electrical Compliance
  - Hard Wired Smoke Alarms
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Outside:**

- Pool Cleaning
- Lawn mowing
- Gardening
- General repairs

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Gutter cleaning

Electrical compliance for sheds etc

Gate/access repairs

Other: \_\_\_\_\_