

6 ways to spring-clean your legal life - AvvoStories

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MONEY, TAXES

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BRIEF

They say nothing is certain but death and taxes. Since you're already dealing with taxes in April, you might as well give death its due and update your estate plans, too. By extending your spring cleaning to include a review of your files, you can ensure that your legal life is as tidy as your office space.

Taxes

If you missed out on a few write-offs, your financial advisor can help you plan to do better next year. But if your finances are extremely complicated or if you find yourself on the bad side of the IRS, review your situation with a [tax attorney](#).

Insurance

Health, life, auto, home or [renters'](#) insurance – there's a lot to keep track of. Figure out what coverage you need and what plans you qualify for. Find an insurance broker if you need help to make sure you are neither paying for more than you need or leaving yourself open to unnecessary risk.

Credit Reports

Even if you have a credit card that alerts you when your credit score changes, it's a good idea to check your full [credit report](#) every year. At the very least it will let you know how you got the score you have. But errors are not uncommon and cleaning your credit report of inaccuracies can have significant financial payoffs in the future – especially if you are considering taking out a mortgage or other large debt.

Wills

Few things are less appealing than spending an afternoon planning for your own death. But [estate planning](#) doesn't have to be painful, and there are [really good](#) reasons to do it. A single session with an attorney can help you set up a will or a living will—and understand the difference.

Trusts and Power of Attorney

People hear “trust fund” and think of Ivy League colleges and country estates. But trust funds and powers of attorney are useful tools even for families of modest means who need to plan for the care of elderly or special needs relatives. Trust funds can also be used to ensure [estate taxes](#) don't eat up a small inheritance.

Spring Clean

You can't clean your house once and expect it to stay that way, and legal affairs are no different. Changes in your life—marital status, children, employment, your health—change how you should manage your taxes and estate. An annual tradition of spring cleaning your paperwork keeps everything up to date and lets you cruise into a carefree summer.

Tagged [estate planning](#)

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