



### About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed **Crider Law PC** in 1999 so he could help individuals and business owners by providing creative solutions and be their trusted advisor and legal counselor. He serves his clients by listening closely to their goals, dreams and concerns and working with them to develop superior and comprehensive estate and asset protection plans. His estate planning practice focuses on preserving and growing wealth by providing comprehensive, highly personalized estate planning counsel to couples, families, individuals and businesses.

# Errors to Avoid in Estate Planning

By Matthew Crider, JD | Family Wealth Protection Attorney

Many people who are otherwise savvy when it comes to financial matters still make a number of mistakes when it comes to estate planning. Here are some of the most common errors people make, [according to an article in Forbes Magazine](#).

## 1) Not having a plan

If you don't have a will, then the state will make the decisions for you as to who gets what when you die. And the state may not do what you would have wanted. Even a simple will is better than nothing.

## 2) Going on line to prepare your own will

This can be a recipe for disaster. Estate planning documents should be the result of a well thought out financial and estate plan. A qualified estate planning attorney can do it right, accounting for the specifics of your personal situation as well as ever-changing state laws.

## 3) Failure to review beneficiary designations and the titling of assets

Sometimes people designate someone as the beneficiary of their IRA or other retirement assets at one time in their lives but fail to account for changes that they would have liked to have made. Assets can go to the wrong people.

## 4) Failure to consider the estate tax consequences of life insurance

Life insurance proceeds are part of your estate if you own the policy at death. But you can transfer ownership of your policy while you are still alive to avoid estate taxes. This is usually done by the use of a trust. Each person's situation is different and must be considered in making this decision.

## 5) Leaving assets outright to adult children

You may want to leave assets in trust for your children. This may not be as much to prevent immature heirs from squandering the assets as to protect the assets from going to a spouse in divorce proceedings.

## 6) Failing to maximize annual gifts

Gifting is the best way to minimize future estate taxes. While many people know of the \$13,000 annual exclusion, they may not know that they may give large sums too — up to \$5.12 million this year.