COURTNEY

inherited a house? the first 7 things to do

A practical starting guide for families handling an inherited property in Texas.

Guy Courtney Steib
REALTOR®, CPRES, CPE | LPT Realty LLC

Everybody needs a “Guy”,
let me be your real estate “Guy”.

A little about me.



Guy Courtney Steib

REALTOR, US Army Veteran,
and Investor

CPRES, CPE
LPT Realty LLC

Experience, Expertise
& Empathy

My path into real estate started as an investor. After buying, holding and selling property myself, I became an agent to help others make informed decisions about their homes and their future.

I am an Army veteran, husband, father and grandfather. I serve Cypress, Katy, Hockley and Northwest Houston, with a focus on helping families through probate and inherited property decisions.

If you are settling a loved one's estate, you may be carrying a lot right now. You do not need every answer today. This guide walks through the first seven things to do so you can protect the property, gather information and take the next step with the right support.

Always here to serve,
Guy Courtney

REALTOR® - Member of the National Association of REALTORS®
CPRES - Certified Probate Real Estate Specialist
CPE - Certified Probate Expert

This guide is general information about Texas probate, not legal advice. For advice about your specific situation, consult a Texas probate attorney. Tax, insurance and sale decisions should be reviewed with the appropriate professionals.

Read more about Guy

STEP 01

get professional help early

Clarify legal authority. Understand the property's value.

Start with a Texas probate attorney to clarify who has legal authority to act and what steps are required before decisions can be made for the estate.

Then connect with a real estate agent experienced in probate. Your agent can assess the home's condition, estimate its current market value, and explain your property options.

WHAT TO DO

- Gather the will, trust documents, and available court paperwork.
- Ask the attorney who can act for the estate and what approvals may be needed.
- Ask your agent for an initial property assessment before committing to repairs or a sale.
- Start with a Texas probate attorney to clarify who has legal authority to act.
- Connect with a real estate agent experienced in probate.
- Have your agent assess the home's condition and estimate its current market value.
- Understand what steps are required before decisions can be made for the estate.

ASK YOUR AGENT

"What needs to happen before we make decisions about the house?"

THE TAKEAWAY

Get both perspectives early so your next move is an informed one.

STEP 02

secure and protect the house

Make property protection an early priority.

Check doors, windows, and access points. Identify who has keys and, with the appropriate authority, arrange access for the people responsible for the property.

If the house is vacant, arrange regular visits. Look for leaks, storm damage, or other immediate maintenance needs. A small problem can become an expensive one when nobody is checking the home.

WHAT TO DO

- Keep a list of keys, access codes, and approved contacts.
- Arrange regular checks and record any problems.
- Address urgent leaks or safety concerns with the appropriate authorization.
- Check doors, windows, and access points.
- Identify who has keys and arrange access for the people responsible for the property.
- If the house is vacant, arrange regular visits.
- Look for leaks, storm damage, or other immediate maintenance needs.

ASK YOUR AGENT

“Who will check the house, and how will we know if something goes wrong?”

THE TAKEAWAY

Protect the house while you work through the decisions ahead.

STEP 03

contact the insurance company

Confirm coverage before assuming the home is protected.

Let the insurance company know the owner has passed away and whether anyone is living in the house. Ask whether the existing policy provides appropriate coverage, whether vacancy affects that coverage, and what changes may be needed. Policy terms vary, so get answers specific to this property.

WHAT TO DO

- Locate the policy number and insurance contact.
- Explain the ownership situation and current occupancy.
- Request written confirmation of any required changes, deadlines, and coverage.
- Let the insurance company know the owner has passed away and whether anyone is living in the house.
- Ask whether the existing policy provides appropriate coverage.
- Ask whether vacancy affects that coverage, and what changes may be needed.
- Get answers specific to this property — policy terms vary.

ASK YOUR AGENT

“What coverage applies while the house is vacant and the estate is being settled?”

THE TAKEAWAY

An existing policy does not replace a conversation about current coverage.

STEP 04

gather bills and property records

Know the expenses before planning your next move.

Locate mortgage statements, property tax records, insurance documents, utility bills, and HOA information.

Make a simple list of expenses, due dates, and contact information. Ask the estate's attorney how these expenses should be handled before paying them from your own funds. Understanding the cost of holding the property will help you plan.

WHAT TO DO

- Create one folder for statements, notices, and property records.
- List payment dates and identify any automatic payments.
- Ask which services should remain active to protect the property.
- Locate mortgage statements, property tax records, insurance documents, utility bills, and HOA information.
- Make a simple list of expenses, due dates, and contact information.
- Ask the estate's attorney how these expenses should be handled before paying them from your own funds.
- Understanding the cost of holding the property will help you plan.

ASK YOUR AGENT

"What does it cost each month to hold this house, and how should those bills be paid?"

THE TAKEAWAY

A clear expense list helps you make a practical plan.

STEP 05

document the house and belongings

Create a record before anything is moved.

Take photos of the home's condition and the belongings inside. Make a basic list of furniture, valuables, and visible maintenance issues.

Before removing, donating, or selling anything, clarify who has authority and whether any items have been specifically left to someone. A clear record can help reduce confusion and keep family conversations focused on the same information.

WHAT TO DO

- Photograph each room and any visible damage.
- Record important belongings without guessing their value.
- Confirm the process for distributing or disposing of contents before a clean-out.
- Take photos of the home's condition and the belongings inside.
- Make a basic list of furniture, valuables, and visible maintenance issues.
- Before removing, donating, or selling anything, clarify who has authority.
- Check whether any items have been specifically left to someone.

ASK YOUR AGENT

"What needs to be documented or set aside before we remove anything?"

THE TAKEAWAY

Document first. Make decisions about belongings with the right authority.

STEP 06

decide which repairs are worth the expense

Compare the cost with the likely benefit.

Before starting a clean-out or renovation, ask your agent to compare selling the house as-is with making selected repairs.

Consider the cost, the time involved, and the likely effect on what the estate receives after selling expenses. Focus first on significant property issues. The goal is a practical decision based on the home, the estate's resources, and your timeline.

WHAT TO DO

- Get an assessment of the home in its current condition.
- Compare repair estimates with likely net proceeds.
- Confirm who can approve work before hiring contractors.
- Before starting a clean-out or renovation, ask your agent to compare selling the house as-is with making selected repairs.
- Consider the cost, the time involved, and the likely effect on what the estate receives after selling expenses.
- Focus first on significant property issues.
- The goal is a practical decision based on the home, the estate's resources, and your timeline.

ASK YOUR AGENT

"Will this work improve the estate's likely outcome enough to justify the cost and time?"

THE TAKEAWAY

Make repairs for a clear reason, with a budget and a plan.

STEP 07

compare options and make a plan

Look at the full picture before committing.

Depending on the estate's circumstances, you may consider keeping the home, renting it, or selling it. Ask the appropriate professionals about the legal, tax, and financial implications of each path.

If selling is the right direction, compare a cash offer with listing on the open market. Look beyond the offered price. Consider preparation costs, selling expenses, timing, contingencies, and the work involved.

WHAT TO DO

- Compare likely net proceeds and holding costs for each selling option.
- Discuss priorities and decision-making responsibilities with the authorized parties.
- Choose the next step after legal authority, value, and condition are understood.
- Consider keeping the home, renting it, or selling it.
- Ask the appropriate professionals about the legal, tax, and financial implications of each path.
- If selling, compare a cash offer with listing on the open market.
- Look beyond the offered price — consider preparation costs, selling expenses, timing, contingencies, and the work involved.

ASK YOUR AGENT

"Which option best fits the estate's needs, resources, and timeline?"

THE TAKEAWAY

Choose the path that fits your circumstances and informed priorities.

your first-steps checklist

Print this page. Check the boxes as you go — and call me when one of them needs a hand.

GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

- ☐ Texas probate attorney chosen
- ☐ Probate-experienced agent connected
- ☐ Legal authority and approvals confirmed

SECURE THE HOUSE

- ☐ Keys, access codes, and approved contacts listed
- ☐ Regular checks arranged
- ☐ Urgent leaks or safety concerns addressed

CONFIRM INSURANCE

- ☐ Policy number and insurance contact located
- ☐ Insurer told the owner has passed away
- ☐ Coverage confirmed in writing

GATHER BILLS AND RECORDS

- ☐ Mortgage, tax, insurance, utility, and HOA records in one folder
- ☐ Payment dates and automatic payments listed
- ☐ Cost of holding the house understood

DOCUMENT THE HOUSE

- ☐ Each room and visible damage photographed
- ☐ Important belongings recorded
- ☐ Distribution process confirmed before a clean-out

REVIEW REPAIRS

- ☐ Home assessed in its current condition
- ☐ Repair estimates compared with likely net proceeds
- ☐ Who can approve work confirmed

COMPARE OPTIONS

- ☐ Keeping, renting, and selling compared
- ☐ Cash offer compared with listing on the open market
- ☐ Next step chosen after authority, value, and condition are understood

Let's take the next step.

Have questions about an inherited home? Start with a conversation about the property, your priorities and the decisions ahead.

TALK WITH GUY

Book a 15-minute conversation

Call or text: (281) 413-8257

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Always here to serve,
Guy Courtney Steib | LPT Realty LLC

This guide is general information about Texas probate, not legal advice. For advice about your specific situation, consult a Texas probate attorney.

Texas resources: State Law Library | Estates Code, Chapter 402 | Department of Insurance

inherited a house? your first 7 steps

Print this page and check off each item as you go. If you're sharing the work, write down who's handling the next step and when you'll follow up.

Property address:

- ☐ **Get professional help.** Ask a Texas probate attorney who has authority to act. Ask a probate real estate agent what the home may be worth in its current condition.
- ☐ **Secure the house.** Find out who has keys and arrange regular checks if the home is vacant.
- ☐ **Confirm insurance coverage.** Tell the insurer the owner has passed away and whether anyone is living in the house. Ask what coverage applies now.
- ☐ **Gather bills and records.** Put mortgage, tax, utility, insurance, and HOA records in one place. Note what's due next.
- ☐ **Document the house and belongings.** Take photos and make a short inventory. Check who has authority before removing or donating items.
- ☐ **Review repairs before spending.** Ask your agent to compare selling as-is with making selected repairs. Look at the cost, time, and likely proceeds.
- ☐ **Choose a direction.** Compare keeping, renting, or selling. If selling, compare a cash offer with listing on the open market.

My next action:

Who's handling it?

By when?

Questions to ask my attorney or agent:
