Monthly Carrying-Cost Worksheet

What the house actually costs the estate for every month you spend deciding.

Chapter 2 told you the property decisions can wait — and they can. This is what waiting costs. Fill in your own numbers; skip any line that doesn't apply. Families that skip this step argue about feelings. Families that do it argue about numbers, which is a much shorter argument.

PROPERTY ADDRESS	COUNTY	PREPARED BY	DATE

LINE ITEM	PER MONTH	WHAT TO CHECK
TAXES AND INSURANCE		
Property taxes	$	Annual bill ÷ 12. The exemption may not survive — see call 1.
Homeowner's insurance	$	Ask what happens once the home sits unoccupied — call 2.
Flood insurance	$	Always a separate policy. Confirm one exists and is current.
LOAN AND ASSOCIATION		
Mortgage — principal and interest	$	Note whether taxes and insurance are escrowed in this figure.
Second mortgage, HELOC, or line of credit	$	A reverse mortgage has its own clocks — see Chapter 7.
HOA or condo assessments	$	Include any special assessment. Get a written statement.
KEEPING THE HOUSE RUNNING		
Electric	$	Keep the power on — in Florida, AC is mold prevention.
Water, sewer, and trash	$	
Gas or propane	$	
Lawn care	$	An unmowed yard draws code letters and the wrong attention.
Pool service	$	
Alarm, internet, or other services	$	
Someone checking the house	$	Weekly, and within a day or two of any named storm.
Other	$	
Monthly total add every line above	$	

What the months ahead cost

Use your attorney's estimate of the months remaining — not a guess, and not anyone else's number.

Monthly total $ ______ × months remaining ______ = $ ______

For some estates that number is easily affordable and patience is exactly the right answer. For others it is quietly consuming a modest estate, and knowing that changes the conversation honestly. Either way it is now your number, from your worksheet — and nobody can use a scary version of it on you.

Standing caveat: if the home may be protected homestead, the heirs — not the personal representative — may control decisions about it. See Chapter 5, and bring the question to your probate attorney.

Five calls that change the numbers on page one

Each one takes minutes. Together they decide whether page one is accurate.

1 The county property appraiser

The homestead exemption and the Save Our Homes cap belong to the owner who qualified for them, and Florida law requires the property appraiser to be notified promptly when a property's exempt status changes (Fla. Stat. §196.011(10)). Some survivors keep benefits (see §193.155), which is why this is a call rather than a guess. If an exemption stays in place wrongly, the law provides for back taxes plus a 50 percent penalty and 15 percent annual interest (§196.161).

Who to call: The property appraiser in the county where the house sits.

2 The insurance company

Report the death and ask how long the home can sit unoccupied before coverage is affected — commonly 30 to 60 days, though that is insurance-market practice rather than any Florida statute, and only your policy's terms govern. Ask the roof's age too: Florida law limits an insurer's ability to refuse coverage solely for roof age under 15 years, with an inspection path for older roofs (§627.7011(5)). Hurricane deductibles are a percentage of insured value, not a flat sum (§627.701).

Who to call: Your insurer and an independent agent. Florida DFS consumer helpline: 1-877-693-5236.

3 The loan servicer

Probate does not pause a mortgage, and a secured lender can pursue its remedies if the loan goes unpaid during administration (see Fla. Stat. §733.702(4)). The good news alongside it: a federal law generally prevents a lender from calling the whole loan due when a home passes to a relative because of the borrower's death (Garn-St Germain, 12 U.S.C. §1701j-3(d)). Notify the servicer and ask about its process for successors.

Who to call: The servicer, in writing — and the estate's attorney before paying anything from estate funds.

4 The association

Assessments keep accruing, and Florida law can make a new owner liable for certain unpaid amounts that came before them (§718.116 for condominiums; §720.3085 for homeowners' associations). Ask for a written account statement so a small balance never becomes a lien mid-sale.

Who to call: The association or its management company.

5 The county tax collector

Ask what is owed and when. Florida property-tax bills mail around November 1 with discounts for early payment, and become delinquent April 1.

Who to call: The tax collector in the county where the house sits.

NOTES, QUESTIONS, AND WHAT EACH CALL TOLD YOU