

## Instructions for Objecting to the Person Named as Guardian of a Minor Child in a Deceased Parent's Will

### Important! Read Before Using These Forms and Instructions

ND Legal Self Help Center staff and court employees can't help you fill out the form(s). Carefully read this information and any instructions to which you're referred.

If you're unsure how to proceed, or need legal advice or legal representation, consult a lawyer licensed to practice in North Dakota. If you're unsure if these forms and instructions suit your circumstances, consult a lawyer.

When you represent yourself, you're held to the same requirements and responsibilities as a lawyer, even if you don't understand the rules or procedures.

For information about how to find a lawyer, go to [ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help/finding-a-lawyer](https://ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help/finding-a-lawyer).

As a self-represented individual, you're expected to know and follow the law, including:

- State or federal laws that apply to your case;
- Case law, also called court opinions, that applies to your case; and
- Court rules that apply to your case, which may include:
  - North Dakota Rules of Civil Procedure;
  - North Dakota Rules of Court;
  - North Dakota Rules of Evidence;
  - North Dakota Administrative Rules and Orders; and
  - Any local court rules.

Links to the state laws, case law, and court rules can be found at [ndcourts.gov](https://ndcourts.gov).

A glossary with definitions of legal terms is available at [ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help](https://ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help).

***These instructions and forms aren't a complete statement of the law. They cover basic procedure for objecting to appointment of the guardian of a minor as part of a probate case in a North Dakota state district court. There's no guarantee that all judges and courts will accept forms available through the ND Legal Self Help Center. The Center isn't responsible for any consequences that may result from the forms or information provided. Use at your own risk.***

### You May Use this Packet of Forms If:

1. The minor child's parent is deceased and left a will;
2. The deceased parent's will is being probated in a North Dakota state district court;
3. The deceased parent's will named a person the guardian of the minor child; **AND**
4. You want to object to the person nominated to be guardian of the minor child.

## Overview of the Three Step Process to Object to the Person Named as as Guardian of a Minor in a Deceased Parent's Will

**Step One. Determine in Which North Dakota State District Court the Deceased Parent's Will is Filed for Probate.**

The individual objecting to the nominated guardian must file the document objecting to guardian in the deceased parent's probate case.

**Step Two. Within 14 Days After the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Files the GAL Report, File a Written Objection with the District Court Where the Deceased Parent's Probate Case is Filed.**

The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is appointed by the District Court to prepare a written report with the GAL's recommendation about the nominated guardian and guardianship. The GAL report is due within 60 days of the GAL's appointment by the District Court judge.

Within 14 days of the GAL filing their report with the District Court, any person interested in the welfare of the minor child, including the minor child, may file a written objection in the deceased parent's probate case.

**Step Three. The District Court Immediately Transfers the Guardianship Case to Juvenile Court.**

The Juvenile Court will begin proceedings to determine who should be appointed guardian of the minor child.

## Laws & Rules

The requirements for objecting to the appointment of the guardian of a minor child named in a deceased parent's will are found in **North Dakota Century Code (N.D.C.C.) [Chapter 30.1-27](#)**. Refer to the Chapter when filling out the form.

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## Definitions

**\*\*\*The following definitions are intended to be helpful, but they don't address every possible meaning of the terms in this section.\*\*\***

(See [Chapter 30.1-01](#) and [Chapter 27-20.1](#) of the North Dakota Century Code for more definitions.)

**Appointing Parent:** Also called a Nominating Parent. The deceased parent who named a guardian in the will being probated by a North Dakota state district court

**Best Interests:** The standard the district court judge will use to decide what guardianship arrangement is to the minor child's greatest benefit. The 13 best interest factors the judge will use to make the decision are in [Section 14-09-06.2 of the North Dakota Century Code](#).

**Guardian:** An individual, or individuals, appointed by a North Dakota state district court to act as the minor child's parent.

**Guardian ad Litem (GAL):** An individual appointed by a North Dakota state district court judge to advocate for the best interests of the minor child. The GAL prepares a written report for the District Court.

**Minor Child:** A child of the deceased parent, who is under 18 years of age.

**Nominated Guardian:** An individual, or individuals, who a parent named in their will to become the guardian of the child if the parent dies while the child is a minor.

**Probate:** A legal process that includes:

- Proving to the District Court that the deceased parent's will is valid;
- Identifying, inventorying, and appraising the deceased parent's property;
- Paying the deceased parent's debts and taxes; and
- Distributing the deceased parent's remaining property as directed by the will.

**Testamentary:** Provided for or appointed by a will.

**Venue:** The North Dakota county where the District Court judge will hear the probate case. The venue is the District Court of the North Dakota county where the deceased parent's will is, or will be, probated. Wills are probated either in the North Dakota county where the deceased parent lived, or, if the parent didn't live in North Dakota, in any North Dakota county where the parent had property.

## Fees

A filing fee of \$160.00 is required to file the case to probate the deceased parent's will. If the probate case has already been filed, there is no filing fee required for filing the document objecting to the person the deceased parent nominated as guardian.

**Other fees may apply.** The fees include, but aren't limited to:

- Copy of Documents \$.10 per page, \$1.00 minimum

## Form to Object to the Person Nominated as Guardian of a Minor Child in a Deceased Parent's Will

Form Title	Purpose
Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary)	Completed by the individual who wants to object to the person named in the deceased parent's will becoming the guardian of the minor child.  The individual who wants to object may be 1) any person interested in the welfare of the minor child; and/or 2) the minor child.

## Steps to Object to the Person Nominated as Guardian of a Minor Child in a Deceased Parent's Will

### Step 1 – Determine in Which North Dakota State District Court the Deceased Parent's Will is Filed for Probate.

The individual objecting to the nominated guardian must file the document objecting to the guardian in the deceased parent's probate case.

**To see if the deceased parent's will has been filed for probate** and given a case number, go to [ndcourts.gov/public-access](https://ndcourts.gov/public-access):

- To search for the probate case by the deceased parent's name:
  - Select "Name"
  - Enter at least the first three letters of the deceased parent's last name, followed by an asterisk (\*). For example, if the last name is Smith, enter at least smi\*.

- Enter at least the first letter of deceased parent's first name, followed by an asterisk (\*). For example, if the first name is Jane, enter at least j\*.
- In the "Case Types" box, select "Probate of Will (Formal)" and "Probate of Will (Informal)."
- Click the "Search" box.
- The screen will list publically accessible court cases based on your search.
- To review a case click on the case number on the left-hand side of the screen.

If a probate case hasn't been filed to probate the deceased parent's will, consult a lawyer licensed to practice in North Dakota for advice.

## **Step 2 – Within 14 Days After the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Files the GAL Report, File a Written Objection with the District Court Where the Deceased Parent's Probate Case is Filed.**

**Any person interested in the welfare of the minor child, including the minor child, may object in writing to the person nominated as guardian in the deceased parent's will.**

After the person named in the deceased parent's will files their written acceptance with the District Court to become guardian of the minor child, the District Court judge appoints a Guardian ad Litem (GAL).

The GAL prepares a written report with the GAL's recommendation about the Nominated Guardian and the guardianship.

The GAL's written report is due to the District Court within 60 days of the GAL's appointment.

**Any person objecting to the Nominated Guardian, including the minor child, MUST file their written objection with the District Court WITHIN 14 DAYS after the GAL files their report.**

**First,** the person objecting to the Nominated Guardian completes:

- Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary).

To complete Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary):

- The caption (top) of the form:
  - County – the North Dakota county where the deceased parent's probate case is filed.

- Judicial District – the name of the Judicial District where the deceased parent’s probate case is filed. (The county is within the Judicial District.) County and Judicial District information and maps are available at [www.ndcourts.gov/court-locations](http://www.ndcourts.gov/court-locations).
- “In the Matter of the Estate of” – the deceased parent’s full name.
- Case Number – the probate case number.
- Read each paragraph completely.
  - When you date and sign this form, you’re declaring that all of the information on the form is accurate and true.
- Complete all paragraphs that require you to type or write information.
  - DON’T INCLUDE the minor child’s full name.
  - Write or type only the minor child’s initials.
- Read Paragraph 5 carefully!
  - Make sure everything you type or write is true and correct. Make any corrections before you date and sign this form.
- Write or type the county, state, and country where you sign this form.
- Date and sign the form. Complete all lines below your signature.

**To complete Form 8a: Confidential Information Form (Guardianship Proceeding):**

- Review [Rule 3.4 of the North Dakota Rules of Court](#).
- Certain information is considered confidential and can’t be included in Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary).
- Full confidential information that can’t be included:
  - Full names of minor children
- Include only the following in Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary):
  - Minor child’s initials
- Fill out only the parts of the form that apply. If you don’t have information for a part of the form write or type “Not applicable.”
- Date and sign this form.
- This form won’t be available as a public court record.

Make a copy of the completed Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary) and Form 8a: Confidential Information Form (Guardianship Proceeding) for your records.

**Second,** the person objecting to the Nominated Guardian files the following ORIGINAL completed forms with the Clerk of District Court where the deceased parent's probate case is filed:

- Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary); and
- Form 8a: Confidential Information Form (Guardianship Proceeding).

**The written objection MUST be filed WITHIN 14 DAYS after the GAL files their report.**

### **Step 3 – The District Court Immediately Transfers the Guardianship Case to Juvenile Court.**

After the completed Form 8: Objection to Appointment of Guardian in a Will (Testamentary) and Form 8a: Confidential Information Form (Guardianship Proceeding) are accepted by the Clerk of District Court for filing, the guardianship part of the deceased parent's probate case is transferred to Juvenile Court.

The guardianship case is assigned a Juvenile Court case number.

The Juvenile Court begins proceedings to determine who should be appointed guardian of the minor child.

Information about Juvenile Court guardianship proceedings is available at [ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help/minor-guardianship/juvenile-court](https://ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help/minor-guardianship/juvenile-court).