



Colorado Guardianship Guide

So Now You Are a Guardian

A Colorado guide to caring for,
protecting, and advocating for a ward



A guardian is responsible for the personal care and well-being of another person, called the ward. This role focuses on support, dignity, advocacy, and thoughtful decision-making—not simply taking over. This brochure explains the basics and offers practical guidance for the road ahead.



Your role may include:

- ◆ living arrangements
- ◆ health and personal care
- ◆ services and daily support
- ◆ safety and quality of life



First step

Read the court order and Letters of Guardianship carefully so you understand whether your authority is limited or broad.



**Protect.
Support.
Respect.
Document.**

Denver Office
7900 E. Union Ave., Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80237
303-357-3211

Pueblo Office
310 S. Victoria Ave., Suite G
Pueblo, CO 81003
719-497-9790

www.chapmanlawpllc.com
daniel@chapmanlawpllc.com



This brochure provides general educational information only and is not legal advice. Reading it does not create an attorney-client relationship. Colorado law changes and every situation is different. You should consult an attorney about your specific circumstances.

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Core principle

“Support the ward’s well-being while preserving dignity, independence, and personal choice.”



Guardian vs. Conservator

A guardian usually makes personal and care decisions. A conservator generally manages finances and property.



Nominated vs. Court-Appointed

A nomination in an estate plan does not usually create immediate authority. Court appointment is often required.



Records to Keep

- court orders and Letters of Guardianship
- care plan and provider list
- medication and contact information
- notes of important decisions
- report deadlines and court filings



Common Mistakes to Avoid

- assuming a nomination gives immediate authority
- confusing guardianship with financial authority
- ignoring limits in the court order
- failing to involve the ward
- poor recordkeeping or missed deadlines



When to Call Chapman Law

- before petitioning for guardianship
- family disagreement about care
- a major medical or end-of-life decision
- moving the ward to a new residence or facility
- missed or approaching court deadlines
- modifying or terminating the guardianship



CHAPMAN LAW, PLLC

ESTATE PLANNING

Guardian Action Plan

Practical guidance for protecting, supporting, and advocating for a ward

A guardian’s role centers on personal care, safety, dignity, and quality of life while staying within the authority granted by the court.



1. Know your authority

- Read the court order and Letters of Guardianship carefully.
- Learn whether your powers are limited or broad.
- Understand what decisions may require court approval.



2. Learn the ward and coordinate care

- Understand the ward’s wishes, values, routines, and relationships.
- Meet with doctors, care providers, family members, and support services.
- Locate key care, medical, and planning documents.



3. Make decisions with dignity

- Act in the ward’s best interest.
- Involve the ward whenever possible and encourage independence.
- Avoid unnecessary restrictions and communicate clearly.



4. Keep records and track court duties

- Document major decisions, appointments, incidents, and communications.
- Keep provider lists, medication information, and care notes.
- Calendar required reports and deadlines, including annual reporting such as the Adult Guardian’s Report (JDF 850) when required.

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