

Your Will

Making a will is sensible and practical – you decide what will happen to everything that is yours after you're gone. Unfortunately, nine out of 10 Indians don't make one.

A will is a convenient and often simple and straightforward way to distribute assets to those you love. It's also a powerful way to help animals.

You can structure your will to make PETA India the beneficiary of a specific financial amount or property, of a percentage of your estate, or of your residuary estate, which is what remains after all specific legacies and expenses have been accounted for.

A will is an important way you can ensure your assets will be distributed according to your wishes. Failure to plan properly and express your wishes in a will or another estate document will result in a loss of control of your estate once you have passed, and your estate assets will be distributed in accordance with the law, regardless of your intentions. Through a properly tailored will or other estate plan, you can ensure your compassion continues to make a difference for animals long after you are gone.

The following is sample language to make PETA India a beneficiary of your will. You can share it with your solicitor:

I leave PETA India, Post Box No 28260, Juhu, Mumbai 400 049, [one of the following options].”

- “all the residue of my estate”
- “[fraction (eg, 1/3)] share of my estate”
- “the sum of Rs [amount]”
- [clearly described items, such as necklaces, artifacts, furniture, a car with its licence plate number listed, or a piece of property with its address listed]

How to Make a Will

It's very simple to make a will. First, make a list of everything you own. The value of your house, your car, and other possessions could add up to a considerable amount.

A will has to be in writing and signed by you in the presence of two witnesses. (Anyone over 18 is eligible to be a witness.) The witnesses must sign the will to attest to the fact that they observed as you signed it. You must choose and appoint an executor to see that the instructions in your will are carried out correctly.

It's recommended – but not required – that you consult a solicitor of your choice for assistance in drawing up a will.

The original copy of the will can be kept with you or your solicitor, and it's recommended that your solicitor keep a copy. **There are no legal formalities involved.**

When to Make a Will

The sooner you make a will, the better – especially if you are married and have a family. Each spouse should make his or her own will.

Changing Your Will

You can make as many changes to your will as you want, as often as you want. Updates must be separate legal documents, which must be signed and witnessed in the correct legal manner.

You can also make a completely new will. If you remarry, you certainly should create a new will.

We would like to caution you that you should not attempt to change a will by crossing parts out or adding words. Doing so could invalidate your will, compromising the whole purpose of making one.

If you want to change your will in order to leave a bequest to a charitable organisation by means of a codicil, we recommend the following wording:

“This is [donor’s name] of [donor’s address]. I amend clause [number] of my previous will to leave PETA India, Post Box No 28260, Juhu, Mumbai 400 049, [one of the following options].”

- “all the residue of my estate”
- “[fraction (eg, 1/3)] share of my estate”
- “the sum of Rs [amount]”
- [clearly described items, such as necklaces, artefacts, furniture, a car with its licence plate number listed, or a piece of property with its address listed]

The document will have to be signed and witnessed in the same legal manner and attached to the will.