

Widowed Community Wealth Reminders™, February 2020



Your wealth consists of what you own and owe, such as vehicles, homes, investment portfolio and mortgage. Legal issues, taxes, healthcare decisions and even the way you use your computer, tablet and smartphone can affect your wealth.

The **Widowed Community Wealth Reminders™** is published monthly to help you proactively manage and protect your

wealth during times when grief manifests as forgetfulness, lack of focus or a sense of being overwhelmed.

Don't feel that the entire list must be done immediately; spread the tasks out by taking care of two or three each week. A few tasks such as checking your car's tire pressure and fluid levels repeat every month and these reoccurring tasks are near the bottom of the list. Those tasks that don't repeat every month are found at the top of the list.

Not every published Reminder may apply to your situation. The timing of some published reminders may differ from your specific situation, so adjust accordingly. If you find a recurring task in your own life that isn't published through this blog, please let me know via my [Contact](#) page or Submit a Comment at the bottom of this page.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Secure Your Home Wi-Fi Router. If you use Wi-Fi in your home or have multiple computers, TVs, or other devices connected to the internet, you most likely have a Wi-Fi router handling this task for you. Make sure your router is properly secured to prevent unwanted access to your entire home network. Talk with your computer technician about securing your router.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review Your Long-Term Care Insurance Policy. Review any insurance or annuity product that provides or may provide long-term care (LTC) benefits. This could be a traditional LTC insurance policy or a hybrid life insurance policy or annuity that offers LTC benefits. In recent years premiums have increased while benefits decreased. Several insurance companies are no longer offering LTC insurance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make Property Tax Payments. For Maricopa County, Arizona, the first half of the payment is due Oct 1st and the second half is due by March 1st of the following year. Other counties in Arizona and other states may have different due dates, but make sure your property tax is paid when due.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Your Home Reverse Osmosis Water System. A Reverse Osmosis (R/O) system may be found under your sink or even in your refrigerator and provide highly filtered drinking water. RO systems typically have a pre-filter plus several stages of filtration. Depending on water quality the pre-filter and carbon stages might need replaced every 6 to 9 months. Other stages may last longer. Frequency will depend on use and size of family. Read the manufacturer's recommendation as well. Some refrigerators have a water filter requiring periodic replacement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Your Home Water Softener System. Depending on family size and water usage, refill the salt in your water softener system as needed. It could need several bags a month. Check the salt level in the tank at least monthly to be sure. Some areas may not need a water softener system. Here in Arizona, we need them!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect Home Fire, Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors. The U.S. Fire Administration recommends checking your smoke and fire detectors once a month, replacing batteries twice a

	year and replacing the entire detector every ten years. Carbon monoxide detectors last about five to seven years.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect Home Fire Extinguishers. Inspect the seals, proper gauge pressure and for any damage every month. Extinguishers last five to 15 years. If you don't have a fire extinguisher, please get one or two. You may never use them, but they are available if needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check Vehicle Fluid Levels. Most cars (electric cars may be different) use up to seven different fluids to keep them running and operational; radiator fluid, power steering fluid, brake fluid, engine oil, automatic transmission fluid, air conditioning coolant and windshield cleaning fluid. Except for air conditioning coolant, I check fluids monthly to make sure levels are appropriate. Older or high mileage vehicles may require more frequent checks. Each fluid has its own requirement for replacement. Some manufacturers do not provide a schedule to flush or replace the fluid. Engine oil is listed as a separate Weekly Wealth Reminder because it's changed more often than the other fluids.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check Vehicle Tire Air Pressure. Check periodically or when your car's tire pressure monitoring system indicates low air pressure to ensure vehicle safety and improve gas mileage. Every day visually your tires as you approach your vehicle. Each month check your tire pressure with a tire pressure gauge. The cheap one- or two-dollar gauges probably aren't worth it and the gauges at the gas stations may be broken or inaccurate.



I hope you find this month's Wealth Reminders valuable. Please visit WidowedCommunity.org for more blog posts related to financial knowledge, know-how and wisdom for high net worth widows and widowers.

Jim Schwartz is a [Scottsdale, AZ fee-only financial planner](#) with an expertise and interest in [financial planning and education for widows and widowers](#). Years of working with and advising widows, widowers, and surviving partners has provided a wealth of experience and knowledge in this complicated financial arena. He is particularly skilled in his ability to guide his clients through difficult decisions while ensuring the stability of their finances.

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Important Note: This post provides general educational information and is not specific advice for your situation. Your situation may differ.