

## Prince Philip's will to be sealed for at least 90 years



If a grant of probate is needed to administer your estate, your will becomes a public document when the grant is issued. The government keep an online public register which can be searched by any member of the public and copies of any will or codicil can be purchased for a small fee. Wills are a rich source of family history for those researching their family trees.

However, you may have seen in the press that the will of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh will be sealed for an initial period of 90 years from the grant of probate being issued. This means that the Duke of Edinburgh's will, will not be available to the public.

This judgment is in line with convention of more than 100 years that wills of senior members of the Royal Family are sealed. The wills of the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret are both sealed and the President of the Family Division has confirmed that he looks after a safe which holds thirty sealed wills.

However, whilst previously these wills were sealed indefinitely, this judgment sets out that the wills may be unsealed after the initial period of 90 years. This is subject to a review of the will as to whether it should be made public and a further submission to the Court.

The judgment also highlighted that the Sovereign's will will not have to be proved under the usual probate rules but that all other members of the Royal Family will have to have their estates administered under the normal probate rules.

This is, of course, an interesting public news story. However, it is also worthwhile keeping in mind when drafting your will that it does eventually become a public document, as does any codicil to your will, although of course any letter of wishes would remain private.



Read [the full judgment made by Sir Andrew McFarlane](#).

For more information about wills please contact Harriet Page on +44 (0)20 7591 3309 or [harriet.page@cripps.co.uk](mailto:harriet.page@cripps.co.uk).

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