

Understanding Power of Attorney

What is Power of Attorney?

Power of Attorney (POA) allows someone you trust to act on your behalf if you're unable to. It's essential for managing your finances, health decisions, or legal matters during temporary or permanent incapacity.

Types of Power of Attorney

Type	Purpose	When It's Active
General POA	Handles finances, legal matters	Only while you're competent
Durable POA	Same as above, continues if incapacitated	Even after incapacity
Medical POA	Makes medical decisions if you're unable	During medical incapacity
Limited POA	Grants specific powers only	Time-limited or event-based

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Not specifying 'durable' - it may become invalid when you need it most.
- Failing to name a backup or successor agent.
- Not notarizing or sharing the POA with those who need it.

How to Create One

Creating a POA can be simple in many states. You must sign it, often in front of a notary. Make copies and store it safely. Share with your doctor, trusted family members, and financial institutions.