



A simple guide on what to do when someone dies

The list of things to do following a death can feel overwhelming. This guide gives you a starting point to cover most situations. The order in which they need to be done will be different for everyone so do ask advice where you can from people who are used to the process.

- As soon as possible after someone dies, the death needs to be certified by a medical practitioner. Where the death occurs in a hospital, hospice or Care Home the staff will usually take care of contacting a doctor. Where the death occurs at home, call Emergency Services or the GP surgery where the deceased was registered.
- You may be required to arrange for the deceased to be taken to a Funeral Home or similar. Many Funeral Directors have an out of hours service if needed.
- Begin the process of notifying family, friends, employers etc. This can be a lengthy and upsetting (though sometimes cathartic) process so do enlist help with this. I.e. where relevant, ask significant people to pass the message on to the people in their family, organisation etc.

Take some time to relax and rest.

- A Death Certificate will be issued by the practitioner who certified the death. This isn't issued immediately and you'll be advised on when and where to collect this once it's ready.
- The death then needs to be registered at the local Registry Office. When collecting the certificate, order a few extra copies as some organisations will want to see an original. For others, a photograph will suffice.

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- Do your best to find all relevant documents: the Will, the deceased's choices and wishes for their funeral/celebration of life, any receipts for pre-paid funeral plans, organ donor card, etc. Where the Will names a executors other than you, get in touch with them as soon as possible.
- Make an appointment with the Funeral Director to explore options for the funeral arrangements.
- If you have a particular celebrant in mind to lead the funeral or Celebration of Life, contact them to find out their availability, ideally ahead of your meeting with the Funeral Director.
- There will be a lot of decisions to make, and they don't all have to be made at once, e.g. will there be a burial, cremation or a different option? What format do you want the funeral to take? The list is more extensive than you might think. While the Funeral Director or Home will talk this through with you, they may sometimes try to guide you towards a set format. Remember that they are there to help you, their client, so do let them know if you have other ideas in mind.

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- If there's to be a photo tribute of any kind, start to collect and choose photos. This can be a cathartic process for you and one you can do with others.
- If you are planning to write the Eulogy or deceased's story yourself, make a start on this as you feel ready. Ask friends, family and colleagues for stories and other details to include or to be read out separately.



It's likely you won't know whether you're coming or going in those first few days and yet there's so much to do, so here are a few ideas to keep things simple for you during that time:

- Start a master file or folder to keep all documents, contacts, account lists, policy numbers, passwords/access notes, etc. as well as your own to-do lists. Keep this in a way that's easy for you, i.e. a physical notebook or folder or an online folder.
- Keep a note of every call made and document requested.

NB: Throughout all of this process, be sure to factor in time for your normal pastimes and activities and be kind to yourself. These are tough times and you need to prioritise your own self-care. Ask for help when you need it.