

Checklist: What to Do When a Death Occurs

The death of a loved one and planning a funeral or memorial can be emotionally and physically exhausting. It's also something most of us only experience a few times in our lives. Therefore, many aren't aware of the steps that need to be taken after a death.

The checklist below takes you, step by step, through the process. Use it to help ensure that you are taking care of all the necessary details so you can concentrate on providing a beautiful life tribute for your loved one.

1. Contact the appropriate party:

- If the death occurred at a hospital or while in hospice, speak with the staff regarding when the funeral director should be contacted and who is responsible for doing so (family or staff).
- If the death was unanticipated and did not occur at a hospital, call 911 to go through the appropriate emergency procedures.

2. Connect with the funeral home (if not already done):

- Answer some basic questions that will better prepare them to receive and transport the deceased.
- Schedule a time to make funeral arrangements.

3. Notify important individuals:

- Friends and family
- Church and clergy (this can also be done once arrangements have been made)

4. Arrangements for the following circumstances, if applicable:

- Tend to the person's home – clean out refrigerator, water plants, collect mail, etc.
- Take care of or make arrangements for dependents.
- Take care of or make arrangements for pet/animal care

5. If not already discussed, begin to talk with close family and friends about the type of service or memorial that would best honor your loved one's life.

- Discuss how youth and children in the family might be able to play a role in honoring their loved one at the service. Your funeral director will help you explore options.
- Discuss potential venues for the visitation, service or celebration, as appropriate (e.g., funeral home, church, park, community center, etc.).
- Consider the people, events, activities and things that were important to your loved one. Your funeral director will help you incorporate them into a meaningful tribute.