

What To Do When a Loved One Dies

Immediately

- ☐ Get legal pronouncement of death.
 - If in a hospital or nursing home, the staff will take care of it.
 - If under hospice care at home, the hospice nurse can declare death.
 - If at home without hospice care, call 911. Have the do-not-resuscitate order ready, if applicable.
- ☐ Locate written instructions (Ideally, do this before death occurs):
 - ☐ Organ donation: The hospital will coordinate this. Most people who die at home won't qualify.
 - ☐ Whole body donation: Immediately call UR Medical Center, (585) 275-2592 or 275-2270.
 - ☐ An Appointment of Agent form, naming someone other than next-of-kin to make arrangements.
 - ☐ Any prepaid funeral or cemetery plans.

Same day

- ☐ Contact immediate family.
- ☐ Call a funeral home. In NYS, only a funeral director can transport the body and fill out paperwork.
- ☐ Arrange for care of dependent children and pets.
- ☐ Notify the employer and request information about any benefits and life insurance.
- ☐ Delegate someone to watch the home: answer the phone, collect mail, and keep property secure.

First week

- ☐ Contact other relatives and close friends.
- ☐ Find the life insurance policy and call the agent to request claim forms.
- ☐ Visit the funeral home and finalize plans. In most cases you will have to pay up-front.
- ☐ Contact Social Security to ask about any death benefits, and confirm that they have been notified by the funeral home.
- ☐ Put a death notice in paper or post on Facebook if you wish.
- ☐ Order multiple death certificates from the funeral director or County Health Department.
- ☐ Inform the person's doctor.
- ☐ Notify the landlord, nursing home, or assisted living place, if applicable.
- ☐ Close credit card accounts, notify credit report agencies, and cancel or transfer recurring payments.
- ☐ Notify the Department of Veterans Affairs to stop monthly checks, and ask about any death benefits.
- ☐ Find the will (if it exists) and contact a lawyer to start the probate or estate administration proceeding.

Subsequent weeks

- ☐ Cancel driver's license to prevent identity theft.
- ☐ Contact the post office and have mail forwarded.
- ☐ Cancel unneeded services, such as phone, cable, newspaper, insurance, etc.
- ☐ Visit the bank to close or transfer accounts and check contents of the safe deposit box.
- ☐ Contact any investment adviser for information about holdings, and accountant about tax filings.
- ☐ Locate mortgage, home insurance, loan and title documents, and notify these agencies.
- ☐ Make a list of important bills; pay only what is necessary to protect the assets, e.g., mortgage, car payment, insurance, etc. Ask the lawyer about the rest.
- ☐ Close email, social media, and other online accounts.

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