

What To Do When Someone Dies

Here are some tips to help guide you through the steps which need to take place after a death occurs.

When a death occurs we encourage you to call us straight away and we can advise you on what to do next and the process involved. ***We are here to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.***

Doctor's Certificate of Cause of Death

Whether someone dies at home, in a nursing home or in hospital, a doctor will issue a Doctor's Certificate of *Cause of Death*. This, together with other documents, depending on whether it is a burial or cremation, are required to arrange permits and allow us authority to act. Things are a bit different if the person has died unexpectedly, as the State Coroner may need to be notified. In these cases it can take longer for the funeral to take place as a Coroners authority needs to be issued.

What to do when someone dies at home

If the person has died at home or in a nursing home, a doctor, or suitably qualified person will issue a document declaring 'life extinct'. Generally the usual treating doctor will then be contacted by us to arrange the required legal paperwork. Once a person has been legally certified as having passed, you can contact us to arrange the transfer from your home or the nursing home, and we will bring them into our care until the day of the funeral. You are welcome to call us immediately when someone has passed but until they have been seen by a doctor or suitably qualified person, we are not able to collect them.

What to do when someone dies in hospital

If someone has died in hospital and their death was expected, the doctor will issue a Doctor's Certificate of *Cause of Death*, together with any other required documents. During this time the person who has died will be kept in a secure hospital mortuary until the documents are ready.

Once the documents are ready, we will be able to collect your loved one and bring them into our care. Please call us when they have passed so we can let the hospital know we are your chosen funeral director, as typically hospitals don't call funeral directors to inform us.

If someone has died unexpectedly in hospital, the hospital may need to refer the deceased to the State Coroner for review or a post-mortem examination to determine the cause of death. We will talk you through this process and what to do in this instance.

What is the role of the Coroner?

The State Coroner will investigate the cause of death if someone has died unexpectedly. A doctor or police officer will contact the Coroner to begin their investigation, where a post-mortem may need to take place to identify the cause of death. The Coroner doesn't have to seek the permission from the next-of-kin to conduct a post-mortem. Once this is complete and the cause of death has been identified, and after we have submitted a next-of-kin form, we will be able to collect the person who has died and bring them into our care until the day of the funeral.

This process is usually about 5 working days but can vary up to 4 weeks if a clear determination is not made.

How to register a death

As part of our funeral arrangement we collect all information on registering a death with Births Deaths and Marriages SA. The Registrar will need to know some details about the person who has died and will be provided with documentation from us and the doctor/Coroner before they can issue a certificate.

A certificate is issued by Births Deaths and Marriages usually up to three weeks following the registration of a death. A death cannot be registered until the actual burial or cremation has taken place. For Coronial cases, an interim certificate is issued with a final issued often 12-18 months later.

Arranging a funeral

Once you've completed the steps above you need to begin considering the funeral arrangements. For example:

- Will it be a burial or a cremation?
- Where will the funeral take place?
- Did your loved one have a funeral plan?

If you're ready you can begin the arrangements via our online planning form. One of our funeral directors will then be in touch to talk with you further. If online forms are not your thing, simply call us on 08 8311 3991 to get started.