



On losing a loved one, the formalities may feel overwhelming. Here's our simple guide.

Registering a death





When someone dies their death must be registered, this creates a legal record. Your funeral director will help you, though they cannot register the death for you. The process is usually simple, although the details depend on where the person died, and whether their death was expected or not.

– When must I register the death?

You must register the death within 5 days in the UK, or within 8 in Scotland. However, if the death has been reported to the Coroner you cannot register until they have found out the cause of death.

– What is a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death?

The doctor who last cared for the person who died will issue this certificate, and you take it with you when registering the death. If the death was sudden or unexpected, or the doctor did not see the patient recently, the doctor will refer the death to the Coroner instead of issuing a certificate.

– Who can register the death?

Usually a relative or executor registers the death. However if there is no relative or executor, anyone present at the death can register, or if they cannot, the owner or occupier of the building where they died, or the person arranging the funeral (not the funeral director).

– What do I need to take?

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death; the person's full name, including their maiden name; their date and place of birth and death; their NHS Medical Card and their NI number if you can; their occupation, marital status, and spouse's occupation; their usual address; details of any state pension or benefits.

– Where do I register?

At the register office in the district where the person died. Your funeral director can tell you where it is. It is strongly advised that you make an appointment.

– What happens next?

The Registrar will give you a certificate for burial or cremation to give to the funeral director. They will also give you a death certificate; you can buy extra copies for solicitors, banks, and other organisations. They will give you the certificate of registration or notification of death (BD8) with which to inform the Department of Work and pensions; they may offer the Tell Us Once service to notify government services.

We are here to help you 24 hours a day.

You can find your local funeral director by ringing 0800 258 5903, or by visiting funeralpartners.co.uk



Our free advice line is open Monday to Friday 9–5 and Saturday 9–2, on 0800 856 1403.