

## **Information for the newly bereaved**

These brief notes are intended solely to provide guidance about the immediate tasks that need to be accomplished upon a death. In common with many other modern funeral directors, our role often extends far beyond simply making the funeral arrangements. There will be many other matters arising from a bereavement that may need your attention and we are able to advise you of your responsibilities, the choices open to you and most importantly, to assist where we can or ensure you get the help you may need.

**After The Death:** If the death has occurred in a Hospital, you may well have been given a "Bereavement Brochure" by hospital staff detailing much of what is contained here. If however, the death has occurred at a private residence or care home, then usually the first act is to remove the deceased to our funeral home in Nailsworth. (Refer also to "**Care Of The Deceased**").

Inevitably there will be a great many things to think about but there is no need to rush into any decision-making or activity. However, the two primary tasks to consider at this stage are: 1) registering the death, & 2) arranging the funeral.

**Registering the death** is covered in detail under a separate heading.

**Arranging The Funeral:** At the time of first contact with you, your funeral director will ask about making an appointment to meet with you, either at our office or your home, to discuss the funeral arrangements. There is no hurry to meet and make arrangements - you may prefer to contact us again at a later stage to arrange an appointment, when you and maybe other relatives have had a chance to gather your thoughts. To help prepare for when you do meet with the funeral director, a guide to the principal points to be considered is provided below:

Venue for the funeral service: Church / Chapel, Crematorium Chapel or other venue?

Which of the following types of funeral service / ceremony would be most appropriate in your particular circumstances?:

- a) A religious service (*in which case, do you know which denomination the deceased belonged to?*)
- b) A Non-religious (Humanist) funeral ceremony
- c) A Civil Ceremony (usually a combination of religious & humanist elements to reflect individual personal beliefs)

Hymns / music: do you have any specific chosen hymns, or would a spoken service be more appropriate. Either way, is recorded music (of your choice) also to be incorporated?

When burial is chosen: which Churchyard or Cemetery? New grave (single or double-depth) or re-opening of existing / pre-purchased plot?

When cremation is chosen: ashes to be scattered in Crematorium Garden Of Remembrance / interred in Churchyard/Cemetery / returned to family for private scattering?

Transport: family mourners using own transport or is/are limousine(s) required? Is the cortege to start from a specific address or is everyone to meet at the Church / Crematorium?

Choice of coffin: conventional wood range, eco-friendly natural materials range or an individual, bespoke style (e.g. bespoke design, in printed finish)?

Will you wish to see the deceased in our Chapel Of Rest? Would you prefer the deceased to be dressed in their own clothes or would you like us to provide a simple gown?

Jewellery: if deceased was wearing any jewellery is this to be removed or remain in situ?

Newspaper notices: are these required? To be placed in local or national papers?

Donations in lieu of flowers? If so, which charity is to be your chosen recipient?

Family flowers: us to order on your behalf or you to approach florist yourselves?

Are printed order of service sheets required, or do you wish to use the hymn books provided by the Church / Crematorium?

Is nametaking (listing of mourners) required?

This list is not exhaustive and there may be many other small but vital details to be discussed according to each individual situation. The important thing to remember however, is that our role is to ensure that all aspects of the arrangements are discussed with you and to ensure that the arrangements best reflect individual clients' wishes and circumstances. Obviously, funeral expenses are an important consideration, and throughout the arrangement process you will be kept fully

informed of costs. Copies of our company price list are freely available, and an individual itemised estimate of expenses will be submitted to you when the funeral arrangements have been made.

**Deaths Reported To The Coroner :** When someone has died suddenly and unexpectedly and the deceased's Doctor is unable to issue a "Cause Of Death Certificate", or if the death occurred in unnatural or suspicious circumstances, then the Coroner is informed. In such cases, a post mortem examination may be ordered by the Coroner and the body will have to be removed to the County Mortuary, located at The Gloucestershire Coroner's Court Complex, Corinium Avenue, Barnwood, Gloucester. Although the Coroner's involvement rarely delays the funeral beyond the normal timescale, some procedures involved in arranging the funeral - particularly registering the death - occur in a slightly different way with Coroner's cases, so you will be advised by our funeral directors of exactly what to do.

**Care Of The Deceased** Please be assured that once the deceased has been removed to our funeral home, there will be plenty of opportunity to see the person again in our Chapel Of Rest should you wish. Indeed this is one of the questions that you will be asked when making the arrangements with your funeral director. It is important to note that once the deceased is in our care, presentation of the body for viewing is really only practical AFTER arrangements have been made. This is because there will be matters affecting presentation - e.g. choice of coffin, dressing in own clothes or a shroud/gown, etc. - matters which will be discussed as an integral part of the process of making funeral arrangements.

**Registering The Death:** Although you can proceed with making arrangements, the funeral itself cannot take place until the death has been registered. You must first obtain a "Cause Of Death Certificate". This will be signed by the Doctor who attended the deceased during their last illness. The certificate is usually kept at the Surgery for you to collect, so it is wise to contact the Surgery first to ascertain when the certificate will be ready for collection. You must then take this certificate with you to the Registrar For Births, Deaths & Marriages, to register the death. Legally, the death must be registered within 5 days of the death, but in practice must be done as soon as possible as there will be documentation that will be required prior to the funeral for the burial/cremation authorities. If the death has occurred within the Gloucestershire county boundary, you can choose to visit whichever Register Office is located most conveniently to you, but this will be explained by your funeral director. Refer to the following section for details of the local Register Offices and for further information about registration.

**Local Register Office:**

You must make an appointment with your chosen Register Office prior to visiting. You can use the telephone number shown, although for ease & convenience we would thoroughly recommend booking your appointment online - simply log on to [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/registration](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/registration) and follow the clear instructions.

**THE STROUD REGISTER OFFICE**

Parliament Street, Stroud, Glos, GL5 1DY

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

(Telephone or book online to make appointment)

**THE GLOUCESTER REGISTER OFFICE**

Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2TG

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

(Telephone or book online to make appointment)

**THE CHELTENHAM REGISTER OFFICE**

St Georges Road, Cheltenham, Glos, GL50 3EW

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

(Telephone or book online to make appointment)

**THE CIRENCESTER REGISTER OFFICE**

The Memorial Hospital, Sheep Street, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1QW.

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

(Telephone or book online to make appointment)

**Information required to register a death:**

1. "Cause of Death" certificate. (Obtained from the Deceased's Doctor)
2. Date and place of death.
3. Usual address.
4. Full names and surname.
5. Maiden name.
6. Date and place of birth.
7. Occupation.
8. Husband's occupation.
9. Whether the deceased was in receipt of any DSS benefit.

10. Age of surviving spouse.

11. Deceased's Medical Card. (If it can be found. It is not essential for Registration of a death).

12. If the deceased was in receipt of any "Government Pension" eg :- Armed Services, Police, Fire, Civil Service etc, the Registrar will need to know the registration number of the pension so that he/she may notify the appropriate department for them to make the appropriate adjustments for the widow/widower as speedily as possible.

### **CERTIFICATES THE REGISTRAR WILL ISSUE:**

#### **1) "Registrar's Certificate for Burial or Cremation".**

This is a small green certificate which must be given to Fred Stevens Funeral Directors as soon as possible as it must be passed onto the burial/cremation authority in order for the funeral to proceed.

#### **2) "Certified Copies of an Entry" (in the death register).**

The Registrar will give you the opportunity to purchase - for a nominal fee - copies of the entry in the official death register. These "certified copies" constitute death certificates, and are used to administer the deceased's estate. You are advised to buy at least two copies, regardless of the size or complexity of the deceased's affairs.

#### **3) Form 344/Form BD8 for social security purposes.**

This form is used to inform the DSS of the death so that pension/benefits payments to the person who has died can be stopped. This form can also be used to claim Bereavement Benefits.

All information relating to a registration is obtained by direct personal questioning of the informant. Informants are asked to provide supporting documents to help ensure records are accurate and you will be asked to take, on a voluntary basis, various forms of documents to support all relevant areas of the register entry e.g. names, addresses, relationships, places and dates of events.

#### **Supporting documents for the deceased:**

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- Driving License
- Proof of Address (utility bill)
- Marriage/Civil Partnership certificates
- Deed Poll
- NHS medical card

#### **Supporting Documents for the Informant**

- Passport
- Driving License
- Proof of Address (utility bill)

The absence of supporting documents will not prevent the registration from taking place.

Occupation and the full name and occupation of the deceased's spouse or Civil Partner may also be required. The registrar will need to know whether the deceased

was in receipt of any other government pension, in addition to Social Security benefits.

**ALL CERTIFICATES AND THEIR PURPOSE WILL BE EXPLAINED TO YOU BY THE REGISTRAR AT THE TIME OF ISSUE.**

Fred Stevens Funeral Directors  
is a member of The National Association Of Funeral Directors  
and abide by the NAFD Code Of Practice.

