

The First 72 Hours

A calm, ordered list. Take it one line at a time. You do not have to do everything today, and most of this is phone calls.

Right away (the first few hours)

- ☐ If the death was unexpected and the person has not been pronounced, call 911. If they were under hospice care, call the hospice nurse line first.
- ☐ Make sure a legal pronouncement of death is made (doctor, hospice nurse or other authorized person).
- ☐ If organ or tissue donation was wished, tell the care team right away.
- ☐ Call the people on page 2. It is fine to ask one person to pass the news along.
- ☐ Contact the funeral home or cremation provider named in their wishes, or choose one. You may ask for an itemized price list.
- ☐ Ask for certified copies of the death certificate. Many families need about ten.

Day 1 to 2

- ☐ Look for the will, trust, binder or written wishes. Do not distribute belongings or money yet.
- ☐ Arrange care for children, pets and anyone who depended on the person.
- ☐ Secure the home: lock up, collect mail, put valuables and medications away safely.
- ☐ Ask a friend to keep an eye on the home during the service.
- ☐ Tell the employer. Ask about final pay, benefits and any life insurance through work.
- ☐ Do not close accounts or cancel phones and email yet. You may need them to find bills.

Day 2 to 3

- ☐ Plan the service with the funeral home, including any obituary. Veterans: ask about military honors.
- ☐ Gather key papers: ID, insurance policies, recent statements, military discharge (DD-214).
- ☐ Start a call log: date, who you spoke to, reference number.
- ☐ Eat, rest and say yes when people offer help.

Not yet. Hold off on big decisions: selling property, closing accounts, giving away belongings, or paying a demand you do not recognize. Ask for anything in writing.

FILL THIS IN

Who To Call

WHO	NAME	PHONE	NOTES
Family member or friend to pass the news along			
Funeral home or cremation provider			
Doctor or hospice team			
Executor or personal representative			
Attorney			
Employer			
Faith leader or officiant			
Life insurance agent or company			
Friend to watch the home			
Caretaker for pets or children			
Accountant			

Papers to gather

- ☐ Will, trust, powers of attorney
- ☐ Healthcare directive
- ☐ Birth and marriage certificates
- ☐ Military discharge (DD-214)
- ☐ Insurance policies
- ☐ Recent bank and bill statements
- ☐ Deeds, vehicle titles
- ☐ Where the phone and passcode are kept

Next 30 to 90 days

- ☐ Social Security: confirm the report, ask about survivor benefits
- ☐ Life insurance and benefits claims
- ☐ Will and estate: ask an estate attorney early
- ☐ Banks, credit cards, credit bureaus (deceased alert)
- ☐ Final taxes and bills
- ☐ Digital accounts and subscriptions