



First 24 Hours After a Death Checklist



Confirm the Death

- ☐ Call 911 if the death was unexpected and not in a hospital or hospice
- ☐ Notify nursing staff if in a facility (they will pronounce death)
- ☐ Obtain official time of death and note who made the pronouncement



Notify Immediate Contacts

- ☐ Inform close family and friends
- ☐ Contact the person's doctor or hospice provider (if applicable)
- ☐ Notify clergy or spiritual advisor if desired



Secure Legal Documents and Information

- ☐ Locate a will, advance directive, or medical power of attorney
- ☐ Secure ID, Social Security card, insurance documents, and banking info
- ☐ Note preferred funeral home (if known or prearranged)



Arrange Body Transport

- ☐ Contact chosen funeral home or mortuary
- ☐ If none is chosen, ask facility or hospital for guidance
- ☐ Transport must typically happen within hours if at home

“What we have once enjoyed deeply we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”

-Helen Keller



Gather Death Certificate Information

- ☐ Legal name, birthdate, Social Security number
- ☐ Parent names (including mother's maiden name)
- ☐ Veteran status, marital status, occupation
- ☐ Choose how many certified copies may be needed (often 10+)



Notify Key Institutions (as soon as possible)

- ☐ Employer or HR department
- ☐ Insurance companies (life, health, auto)
- ☐ Banks and financial advisors
- ☐ Social Security Administration ([Report a death to SSA](#))
- ☐ Veterans Affairs, if applicable ([VA survivor services](#))



Secure Property and Pets

- ☐ Lock residence and secure valuables
- ☐ Make care arrangements for pets
- ☐ Stop mail delivery or forward it if needed



Begin Funeral or Memorial Planning

- ☐ Contact funeral home or cremation service
- ☐ Begin discussing burial, cremation, or service preferences
- ☐ If prearranged plans exist, follow instructions or contract
- ☐ Consider using a planning service like [memoriasky.com](#)