

Funeral Checklist

By Campbell Rodriguez

- Notify Authorities**
 - If the death occurs outside of a hospital or nursing home you may need to notify authorities of the death** Call your local emergency number to report the death. The authorities will call the coroner. Although it may not actually be necessary to call the coroner, it is a good idea to do so, especially if the deceased had insurance policies.
 - Notify close relatives and friends.**
 - The police are required to notify next of kin** But there will likely be other relatives that should be included, especially if they need to travel some distance to attend the funeral. Don't forget to include close friends.
 - You or the authorities may call the funeral home that will be taking care of the arrangements for the funeral and calling hours.**
 - Notify relatives** Note on the relatives who will be having a part in planning the calling hours and details of the funeral and set up a time to meet with the funeral director to finalize the plans.
 - Discuss who will be responsible for funeral expenses for billing purposes** If there is an executor for the estate of the deceased, this person usually handles this responsibility, but it is entirely up to the family to determine who should handle this responsibility. Often families will divide this responsibility between several family members.
 - Gather the information** You will need it for the completion of the death certificate at the funeral home. Parent's names including middle initials, also the social security number and date of birth of the deceased, their place of work (Name and address) and occupation of the deceased. See Vital Statistics Form.
- The funeral director**
 - The funeral director will guide you through the much of the planning process** Use the following checklist to when meeting with your funeral director.
 - Consider embalming the body**
 - This decision will determine the timing of many decisions you make.**
 - The law requires bodies that are not embalmed be buried sooner than bodies that are embalmed.**
- Clothing & Jewelry**
 - If this will be a traditional burial you need to consider clothing & jewelry** (If this will be a cremation you can eliminate this step.)
 - Clothing** You may want to bring this with you when you meet with the funeral director to make the plans, but this is not essential.
 - Jewelry** Remember any special pins or jewelry. Special pins would include but are not limited to Union and association membership pins. Also Watches, earrings, necklaces, tie tacks, cuff links, or anything that the deceased particularly liked or directed to be included.
- Consider the type of burial**

- Cemetery plot** ;If one has been previously purchased, bring the deed to the plot with you, if you have it, to the funeral home when you make your plans. If you know you have a plot but don't have the deed in your possession, the funeral director can contact the cemetery overseer to arrange confirmation. Otherwise a plot will need to be purchased. The funeral director will assist you with this.
- Vault** ;Your funeral director will describe the various types available.
- Mausoleum**
- Select the casket or container.** ;Wood - Metal - Cardboard (cremation) - Urn
- Open or closed casket**
 - Decide whether it will be opened or closed casket** ;Some clergy persons insist that the casket be closed for the memorial service. If you have a specific wish for the casket to remain open during the service, be sure to specify this when selecting a clergy person to deliver the eulogy.
- Calling hours**
 - Decide on calling hours at the funeral home.**
 - Some families choose not to have calling hours at the funeral home** There is great flexibility and the time(s) selected should try to accommodate the needs of the family and friends.
 - Traditionally hours have been from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p m.** as these hours can accommodate friends who have to work day or evening shifts.
- Funeral services**
 - If you plan to have a funeral service, you need to consider when and where the service will be conducted.**
 - When**
 - Before burial or cremation**
 - After burial or cremation**
 - Where**
 - The funeral home**
 - Church/Temple/Mosque**
 - At the graveside**
- Special Ceremonies**
 - Some Fraternal Orders and the Military may provide special ceremonies for the funeral service.**
 - Check with the local branch of the service the deceased was enlisted in or the Fraternal Order for more information.**
- Seating arrangements for the funeral service**
 - The funeral director should be aware of the relationships of people attending to seat them appropriately.**

- Compose the Obituary
 - Vital statistics
 - Memberships and associations
 - Hobbies
 - See Writing an obituary
- Publishing an obituary
 - Decide on which newspapers or other publications will be used to place the obituary notice.
 - Local
 - Regional
 - Internet
- Flower arrangements
 - Decide on the type of flower arrangements to be provided by the family Relatives and other well wishers may also need to be advised as to your desired floral selections.
 - Casket Spray
 - Lid arrangements
 - Standing spray
 - Matching baskets
 - Specialty pieces (floral hearts, crosses, and bible)
 - Pictures or photo album Consider setting up pictures or a photo album to remind well wishers and family of good times or special events in the life of the deceased.
- Eulogies
 - Decide who will deliver the eulogy
 - Clergy
 - Friend
 - Combination
 - Video eulogy
- Special Recognition
 - Consider special recognition for accomplishments of the deceased.
 - Athletic
 - Political
 - Religious
 - Scientific

- Memorial cards (optional)
 - Choose from funeral home offerings
 - Have unique cards printed
 - Print your own
- Pall bearers
 - Arrange for pall bearers Usually 4 to 6 men are needed.
 - Ask friends or relatives (usually not next of kin)
 - Ask funeral home to arrange for this service.
- Music at calling hours or funeral
 - Generic funeral home selections
 - Favorite recordings of the deceased
 - Other soothing instrumentals
- Grave site transportation
 - Consider who will provide transportation for the family to the grave site Transportation of the deceased is usually provided by the funeral home.
 - Friends and Family
 - Funeral home limo
- Grave marker
 - A temporary marker may be selected if a permanent marker has not been purchased or engraved.
 - Engrave present stone
 - Purchase new stone
 - Veterans plaque Veterans may be eligible for a marker plaque.
 - Special ;insignia A member of a service or charitable organization may be eligible for special insignia to be fixed to the marker.
- Wake or special gathering
 - Decide if there will be a wake or other gathering to celebrate the life of the deceased Consider where and when to hold this gathering.
 - Where
 - When
 - Food
 - Drink
- Accommodating out of town relatives
 - Consider how to accommodate relatives.

- Assist with travel plans
- Airport pick up
- Lodging