

Different procedures depending where the death takes place

At a Hospital

If you are not present at the time of death, the hospital will contact you providing you are named as the next of kin.

Most hospitals have specialist bereavement staff to help and support you, and they will coordinate the issue of the required documents and explain the procedure for registering the death. You will be asked to contact a funeral director of your choice to arrange for the body to be collected from the hospital.

At Home

If the death takes place at home, you should call 999 and ask for Police and Ambulance. If the death is unexpected, the operator will help with instructions on resuscitation and what you can do until the paramedics arrive and take over. They have the authority to confirm the death if there is nothing they can do.

If the death is expected due to an existing illness, you will also need to call the GP, who will be required to issue the death certificate. You will be asked to contact a Funeral Director of your choice to arrange for the body to be collected.

In the case of unexpected death, the Police may need to involve the Coroner (the Procurator Fiscal in Scotland). You may be asked to contact a Funeral Director of your choice to collect the body or the Police or Ambulance Service may arrange for the body to be removed to a mortuary for the coroner to determine the cause of death, before he can issue a death certificate. You will then need to take the certificate to the Registrar's Office to register the death.

In A Public Place

If the death occurs in a public place call 999 and ask for police and Ambulance. The operator will help with instructions on resuscitation and what you can do until the paramedics arrive and take over. They have the authority to confirm the death if there is nothing they can do. The Police or Ambulance Service will arrange for the body to be removed to a mortuary for the coroner to determine the cause of death, before he can issue a death certificate. You will then need to take the certificate to the Registrar's Office to register the death.

In another Country

If someone dies abroad, whether living, working or on holiday, the registration process in that country must be followed to obtain a death Certificate.

The funeral can be arranged in that country if you wish, but if you would prefer, the body can be returned to the UK. This must be done through a professional Funeral Director, authorised for this purpose. They will advise you on the practicalities and the documentation required from:

- Registrar of Deaths and possibly the Coroners Office in the UK
- The country where the death took place.
- The British Embassy or High Commission.

Please be aware that this can be an expensive business, check whether it is covered by travel or relevant insurance before proceeding.

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