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**A Guide To Funerals
& Funeral Planning**

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When a sudden or unexpected death occurs, we realize that there are many things that need to be done by you and your family. If you have little knowledge of funeral homes in your community, there is a convenient list included in this package. Please note that there is no rush in finalizing funeral plans. Discuss the options with your funeral director; they are there to assist you. Funeral directors are “on call” 24 hours a day, every day.

It is the attending physician’s responsibility to complete the Medical Certificate of Death. This document requires the person’s name, age, and the date and cause of death. A pronouncement of death must be made before the transfer from the home or hospital to the funeral home can take place. This certificate, together with the Statement of Death, must be completed in full before registration of the death can take place, and before a Burial Permit can be issued by the local registrar. (OFSA)

The Coroner’s Role

A coroner may investigate when a death occurs within 24 hours of admission to hospital, in a nursing home, in an institution, or is due to other than natural causes. The coroner has the authority to order an autopsy without the consent of the next-of-kin. The authorization of a coroner is required prior to cremation or transfer of a body outside the province. (OFSA)

When you call a funeral home you will be asked:

- Your name, address, phone number, and your relationship to the deceased
- The name of the deceased, his/her address
- The place of death (or where the deceased will be taken – this could be a designated hospital by order of the coroner).
- Who is the executor/executrix of the estate and their phone number and address (if applicable)
- They may wish more information regarding family names and previous contact with funeral home (for newspaper notices or information they may have on record regarding past funerals for your family)

Important

The funeral home may ask for your verbal authorization to transfer the deceased from the home or hospital (when the proper documents are completed by the Doctor/Coroner).

Also, they may ask your permission to proceed with the embalming and preparation of the deceased. Embalming and preparation are not mandatory in Ontario – except by the family's choice if there is to be a private or public viewing or in cases of time delays and transportation on public carriers.

Make the appointment to see the funeral director when it is convenient for you and your family. The interview could last from one to two hours. Dress comfortably, and if possible, take a friend or relative who is not as emotionally involved, who can drive you there, and be able to help understand, discuss and write down the important points.

Information about the deceased

The following information is necessary to help the funeral director interpret your wishes about the funeral services they will provide and personal information that will be needed to register the death with the Ontario Government.

This confidential information will also be used for a document called a Funeral Director's Statement (or proof) of death. This will be useful for the lawyer, banks, life insurance agencies, company benefits, airline rebates, and pension benefits.

- Full name at birth
- Address
- Date of birth
- City or (town), Province (or country) of birth
- Full names and birthplaces of parents
- Social insurance number
- Occupation and company name

Also:

- Your religious person's name (or affiliation). If you do not have a select person, the funeral director will assist you.
- Names of other family members, fraternal, business, and club memberships, military service, etc. This can be included in newspaper notices
- Cemetery Deed or Crematory Information if they are available.

What to take with you to the funeral home

Funeral directors will appreciate the following personal items when you arrive at the funeral home for your appointment.

- A recent picture (preferably one that shows recent hair style and facial expression)
- Dentures and eyeglasses (if they are worn)
- Jewellery, medals, mementoes that have special meaning to the deceased and your family. Remember – you can ask your funeral director to return these to you before cremation, or burial takes place
- Clothing – take what you think is reflective of the person – this may be formal or informal, casual, or reflective of his/her career
- For a male – This could be a suit (jacket and pants), shirt and tie (or shirt and sweater), underwear, socks, and if desired, shoes/slippers
- For a female – This could be a suit (or blouse, skirt and jacket), dress (high necked, long sleeved design is often preferred), pant suit, underclothing (including panty hose/knee highs), and if you wish, shoes/slippers.
- Accessories such as a scarf or shawl may be used.
- Discuss your thought on clothing with the funeral director(s). They can assist and address any concerns.

There will be discussions about some services that will reflect your wishes:

- public or private visitation and funeral service,
- details where services will be held (funeral home or church),
- open or closed casket,
- entombment, burial, or cremation
- costsⁱ