

### **Information for the newly bereaved: When the Coroner is involved:**

These brief notes are intended solely to provide guidance about the immediate tasks that need to be accomplished upon a death. In common with many other modern funeral directors, our role often extends far beyond simply making the funeral arrangements. There will be many other matters arising from a bereavement that may need your attention and we are able to advise you of your responsibilities, the choices open to you and most importantly, to assist where we can or ensure you get the help you may need.

**Why Is The Coroner Involved?:** When someone dies, the death must be registered with the Registrar For Births, Deaths & Marriages before burial or cremation can take place. In order to register a death, a "Medical Cause Of Death Certificate", signed by the Doctor who attended the deceased during their last illness, needs to be presented to the Registrar. However, if the Doctor is not entirely certain as to the cause of death, or if the deceased has not seen a Doctor within 14 days prior to death, a Cause Of Death Certificate cannot be issued and in these instances the death is reported to H.M. Coroner for the district where death occurred.

In cases of apparently natural deaths (albeit sudden or unexpected), The Coroner's function is to establish the precise cause of death so that the death can be registered and the funeral allowed to proceed.

Deaths occurring in unnatural circumstances (e.g. accident, apparent acts of self-harm) or deaths in suspicious circumstances, are also automatically reported to the Coroner.

In cases of unnatural or suspicious circumstances, in addition to establishing the precise cause of death, the Coroner also investigates the events leading up to, and surrounding, the death itself and usually in such cases an Inquest is held.

The first step in any situation is for the body to be removed to the County Mortuary, located at The Gloucestershire Coroner's Court Complex, Corinium Avenue, Barnwood, Gloucester.

(It is important to note that the Coroner's office will normally instruct their contracted funeral director to remove the body from the place of death to the County Mortuary. The Coroner's Office automatically pays for this. However, this does not place you under any obligation and you are still free to choose your own funeral director when arranging the funeral itself).

In the case of apparently natural deaths, the Coroner will try to ascertain the deceased's medical history - usually via the deceased's Doctor - and then decide whether a post-mortem examination is necessary. In the case of unnatural or suspicious deaths a post mortem will automatically be held. Once the post-mortem has been held (usually within 48 hours of a death being reported) the Coroner will inform the next of kin of the cause of death. The Coroner will then need to know whether the funeral is to be a burial or cremation, so that the necessary documentation can be issued. The Coroner will also ask who your appointed funeral director is so that release of the body can be arranged.

**Registering the death** is covered in detail under a separate heading.

**Arranging The Funeral:** At the time of first contact with you, your funeral director will ask about making an appointment to meet with you, either at our office or your home, to discuss the funeral arrangements. There is no hurry to meet and make arrangements - you may prefer to contact us again at a later stage to arrange an appointment, when you and maybe other relatives have had a chance to gather your thoughts. To help prepare for when you do meet with the funeral director, a guide to the principal points to be considered is provided below:

Venue for the funeral service: Church / Chapel, Crematorium Chapel or other venue?

Which of the following types of funeral service / ceremony would be most appropriate in your particular circumstances?:

a) A religious service (*in which case, do you know which denomination the deceased belonged to?*)

b) A Non-religious (Humanist) funeral ceremony

c) A Civil Ceremony (usually a combination of religious & humanist elements to reflect individual personal beliefs)

Hymns / music: do you have any specific chosen hymns, or would a spoken service be more appropriate. Either way, is recorded music (of your choice) also to be incorporated?

When burial is chosen: which Churchyard or Cemetery? New grave (single or double-depth) or re-opening of existing / pre-purchased plot?

When cremation is chosen: ashes to be scattered in Crematorium Garden Of Remembrance / interred in Churchyard/Cemetery / returned to family for private scattering?

Transport: family mourners using own transport or is/are limousine(s) required? Is the cortege to start from a specific address or is everyone to meet at the Church / Crematorium?

Choice of coffin: conventional wood range, eco-friendly natural materials range or an individual, bespoke style (e.g. bespoke design, in printed finish)?

Will you wish to see the deceased in our Chapel Of Rest? Would you prefer the deceased to be dressed in their own clothes or would you like us to provide a simple gown?

Jewellery: if deceased was wearing any jewellery is this to be removed or remain in situ?

Newspaper notices: are these required? To be placed in local or national papers?

Donations in lieu of flowers? If so, which charity is to be your chosen recipient?

Family flowers: us to order on your behalf or you to approach florist yourselves?

Are printed order of service sheets required, or do you wish to use the hymn books provided by the Church / Crematorium?

Is nametaking (listing of mourners) required?

This list is not exhaustive and there may be many other small but vital details to be discussed according to each individual situation. The important thing to remember however, is that our role is to ensure that all aspects of the arrangements are discussed with you and to ensure that the arrangements best reflect individual clients' wishes and circumstances. Obviously, funeral expenses are an important consideration, and throughout the arrangement process you will be kept fully informed of costs. Copies of our company price list are freely available, and an individual itemised estimate of expenses will be submitted to you when the funeral arrangements have been made.

**Care Of The Deceased** Once the body has been released back into the care of the funeral director, there will be plenty of opportunity to see the deceased again in the

Chapel Of Rest if you wish. If a post-mortem has been held, it must be pointed out that there will be no external evidence of this having taken place and you should not feel discouraged from seeing the person again if you wish. Indeed, in the case of unexpected death, it may prove helpful to see the person again, particularly after they have been properly prepared.

#### **GLOUCESTERSHIRE CORONER'S OFFICE:**

H.M. Coroner's Office

##### **Gloucestershire Coroner's Court**

Corinium Avenue

Barnwood

Gloucester

GL4 3DG

Tel: (01452) 305661

**Registering The Death:** Legally, all deaths must be registered. If the death has occurred within the Gloucestershire county boundary, you can choose to visit whichever Register Office is located most conveniently to you.

The Coroner's office will explain where and when you are able to go and register the death, but in summary the following rules apply: When no inquest proceedings are necessary:

**Burial:** The Coroner will send a form to the relevant Register Office informing them that a post-mortem has established the death as natural causes. You must now register the death as soon as possible in order for the burial to proceed.

**Cremation:** The Coroner will issue a Cremation Certificate direct to your funeral director allowing the cremation to proceed. Simultaneously, you have 14 days in which to register the death.

#### **When an inquest needs to be held:**

The Coroner will issue either a burial or cremation certificate direct to your funeral director. The Coroner will register the death AFTER the full inquest hearing has been held. Because this may occur over a period of weeks - or more likely months, the Coroner can issue you with an interim death certificate to enable you to administer the deceased's affairs or estate.

#### **Local Register Offices:**

You must make an appointment with your chosen Register Office prior to visiting. You can use the telephone number shown, although for ease & convenience we

would thoroughly recommend booking your appointment online - simply log on to [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/registration](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/registration) and follow the clear instructions.

#### **THE STROUD REGISTER OFFICE**

Parliament Street, Stroud, Glos, GL5 1DY

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

[\(Telephone or book online to make appointment\)](#)

#### **THE GLOUCESTER REGISTER OFFICE**

Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2TG

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

[\(Telephone or book online to make appointment\)](#)

#### **THE CHELTENHAM REGISTER OFFICE**

St Georges Road, Cheltenham, Glos, GL50 3EW

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

[\(Telephone or book online to make appointment\)](#)

#### **THE CIRENCESTER REGISTER OFFICE**

The Memorial Hospital, Sheep Street, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1QW.

Telephone (01452) 425060 - central booking line

Opening hours :- Monday to Friday, strictly by prior appointment only.

[\(Telephone or book online to make appointment\)](#)

**Below is the information required to register a death, and an explanation of the documents that you need from the Registrar after registering:**

The information the registrar will require is :-

13. Coroner's certificate to the Registrar stating the cause of death. (Pink 100B)
14. Date and place of death.
15. Usual address.
16. Full names and surname.
17. Maiden name.
18. Date and place of birth.
19. Occupation.
20. Husband's occupation.
21. Whether the deceased was in receipt of any DSS benefit.

22. Age of surviving spouse.

23. Deceased's Medical Card. (If it can be found. It is not essential for Registration of a death).

24. If the deceased was in receipt of any "Government Pension" eg :- Armed Services, Police, Fire, Civil Service etc, the Registrar will need to know the registration number of the pension so that he/she may notify the appropriate department for them to make the appropriate adjustments for the widow/widower as speedily as possible.

### **CERTIFICATES THE REGISTRAR WILL ISSUE:**

#### **1) "Registrar's Certificate for Burial" (if applicable).**

This is a small green certificate which must be given to Fred Stevens Funeral Directors as soon as possible as it must be passed onto the burial/cremation authority in order for the funeral to proceed.

#### **2) "Certified Copies of an Entry" (in the death register).**

The Registrar will give you the opportunity to purchase - for a nominal fee - copies of the entry in the official death register. These "certified copies" constitute death certificates, and are used to administer the deceased's estate. You are advised to buy at least two copies, regardless of the size or complexity of the deceased's affairs.

#### **3) Form 344/Form BD8 for social security purposes.**

This form is used to inform the DSS of the death so that pension/benefits payments to the person who has died can be stopped. This form can also be used to claim Bereavement Benefits.

All information relating to a registration is obtained by direct personal questioning of the informant. Informants are asked to provide supporting documents to help ensure records are accurate and you will be asked to take, on a voluntary basis, various forms of documents to support all relevant areas of the register entry e.g. names, addresses, relationships, places and dates of events.

#### **Supporting documents for the deceased:**

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- Driving License
- Proof of Address (utility bill)
- Marriage/Civil Partnership certificates
- Deed Poll
- NHS medical card

#### **Supporting Documents for the Informant**

- Passport
- Driving License
- Proof of Address (utility bill)

The absence of supporting documents will not prevent the registration from taking place.

Occupation and the full name and occupation of the deceased's spouse or Civil Partner may also be required. The registrar will need to know whether the deceased was in receipt of any other government pension, in addition to Social Security benefits.

**ALL CERTIFICATES AND THEIR PURPOSE WILL BE EXPLAINED TO YOU BY THE REGISTRAR AT THE TIME OF ISSUE.**

*Fred Stevens Funeral Directors*

*is a member of The National Association Of Funeral Directors  
and abide by the NAFD Code Of Practice.*

