



Registering a Death

Registering a death is one of the first tasks that will need to be done after a person has died. It needs to be done before a funeral can be arranged.

This factsheet includes information on the different procedures for registering a death in: England and Wales; Scotland; Northern Ireland; and abroad. Each section will detail the procedure, how to find out where to register the death there, who can register the death, and what documents they will need to do so. Their Estate Plan should detail where the documents you will need to take to register the death are stored.

Registering a death in England and Wales

Deaths in England and Wales should normally be notified to the Registrar of Births, Marriages & Deaths within 5 days of the death. If registration is delayed because of involvement of the coroner you do not need to worry.



You need to take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death which is signed by the doctor unless the death has been reported to the coroner in which case you cannot register the death until the coroner gives permission. You will then be given all the documentation needed to arrange a funeral. If you require any information on arranging a funeral please ask for our factsheet on the subject. Registering a death may take about thirty minutes and you may need to make an appointment. You can go to any Register Office, but it is best to use the one in the area

where the person died otherwise the process can take longer. To find out which is the relevant Register Office and their opening times and procedures please visit www.gov.uk/register-offices.

1. Who can register a death?

You can register the death if you are:

- A relative
- Someone who was present at the death
- The person who found the body
- The person in charge of the body
- The person making the arrangements with the funeral directors

2. What do I need to do?

To register the death you will need to take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death with you or tell the registrar that the coroner's office has told you, you can register.

It would also be helpful to take the following documentation with you:

- 'Pink Form' (100B) from the coroner (if you have been given it). Sometimes, the Coroner will send this directly to the Registrar
- The deceased's birth certificate
- The deceased's marriage or civil partnership certificate
- The deceased's NHS medical card

3. You will need to tell the Registrar:

- The person's full name at the time of their death
- Any names they have previously used, including their maiden name
- The person's date and place of birth
- Their last address

- Their occupation
- The full name, date of birth and the occupation of a surviving or late spouse or civil partner
- Whether they were getting a state pension or any other benefits

4. What documents will I be given?

You will be given:

- A Certificate of Registration of Death (form BD8). You may need to fill this out and return it if the person was getting a State pension or benefits. The form will come with a pre-paid envelope so you will know where to send it.
- A Certificate for Burial or Cremation commonly known as the 'green form'. This gives permission for burial or an application for cremation

5. What happens if the cause of death is unknown?

If the death is sudden or the cause of death is unknown, or unexplained it may be reported to the Coroner. In this case you will not have the medical certificate, but the Coroner will give you the following documents or send them direct to the Registrar. The relevant documents are:

- Order for Burial (form 101) or
- Certificate for Cremation (form 6)

These will allow the funeral to take place and should be given to you.

The Certificate after Inquest (form 99 (rev)) will state the cause of death as determined by the Coroner and will be sent to the Registrar.

How to register a death in Scotland

The Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages must register any death occurring in Scotland within eight days of the date of death. You can register the death in any registration district in Scotland. You can find the address of the local Registrar from the hospital, doctor, undertaker or

telephone book. The opening hours of offices vary and some use an appointment system so please check before attending the relevant office. You can have a burial before the death has been registered, but a cremation can only take place after the registration of the death.



For more information please consult the Scottish Government website at:

<https://www.mygov.scot/register-death>.

1. Who can register a death in Scotland?

The death can be registered by:

- Any relative of the deceased
- Any person present when the person died
- The deceased's executor or other legal representative
- Anyone else who knows the information required for the death to be registered

2. What do I need to do?

To register the death you will need to take the following documentation with you:

- The medical certificate stating the cause of death
- The deceased's birth and marriage certificate
- The deceased's NHS medical card
- Any documents relating to the receipt of a pension or allowance received from government funds

If you do not have any of these documents do not worry as the Registrar can still register the death.

3. What documents will I be given

When the death has been registered you will be given:

- A Certificate of Registration of Death to be given to the person in charge of the burial ground or crematorium
- A Social Security Registration of Death Certificate to use to obtain or have any Social Security benefits adjusted
- An abbreviated extract of the death entry (excluding cause of death and parentage details). You can obtain a full extract of the death entry for a fee



How to register a death in Northern Ireland

A death in Northern Ireland should be registered within five days. A death may be registered in any District Registration Office. To find out more information about registering a death in Northern Ireland or to find out where the appropriate register office is please visit: www.nidirect.gov.uk/registering-a-death.

1. Who can register a death?

A death can be registered by:

- A person present at the death
- A person taking care of the funeral arrangements
- The executor or administrator of the deceased's estate
- Any relative of the deceased who knows the details required to be registered. This can include a relative by marriage
- The governor, matron or chief officer of a public building where the death occurred

- A person living in or responsible for the house where the person died
- A person finding or a person taking charge of the body

2. What do I need to do

You will need to take:

- The medical certificate stating the cause of death signed by a doctor

3. You will need to tell the Registrar:

- The full name and surname of the deceased
- The date, the place of death, and the deceased's usual address
- The marital status of the deceased
- The deceased's date and place of birth
- The occupation of the deceased
- The deceased's husband's name and occupation whether living or deceased
- The deceased's maiden name if applicable
- The name and address of the deceased's GP
- Details of any pension the deceased may have had apart from the state pension

4. What documents will I receive?

Once the registration is complete the Registrar will issue the following forms:

- Form GR021 allowing the body to be buried or an application for cremation to be made
- A Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 36/BD8) issued for Social Security purposes if the deceased received any State Pension or benefits

How to register a death that occurred outside the UK

1. What happens if a loved one dies abroad?

If you are living in the UK and a relative or friend dies while abroad you should contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 020 7008 1500. If

you are abroad with them you should contact the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where you are. You can find these on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, details of which can be found at the end of this section. If the person who has died was travelling with a tour company they will often contact you as next of kin. If the death is reported to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office they will send the UK police, or if you are abroad consular staff to inform you of the death. The deceased's name will never be released to the press before the family has been informed.



British Embassy

2. What do I need to do?

If a person dies outside of the United Kingdom their death will need to be registered according to the regulations of the country in which they died. In this case you should contact the local British Embassy for help and information. You will probably need to provide documents about you, and the person who has died, including for example their full name, date of birth and passport number.

You do not have to register the death at the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. However, if you do so you will be given a UK style death registration document and a permanent copy of it will always be available in English from the General Register Office in the UK. Please note though that a consular death registration document is not a UK death certificate. You will need to register the death with the foreign civil authorities and obtain a full foreign death registration before you can apply for a consular death registration. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will also be able to help if the deceased wished for the funeral to be in that country.

3. What happens to the body when you die abroad?

If the body needs to be brought back to the UK for burial or cremation you will need:

- A certified English translation of the death certificate
- Permission from a coroner in the country where the person died to remove the body. The British Consulate will help you to arrange this

If you want them to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can:

- Pass on to their overseas staff what you want to happen to the body. They will do their best to make sure these wishes are carried out. However, in some countries post mortems may occur without your permission and organs may be removed and kept during these procedures without you being informed or consulted
- Tell you about the costs of local burial or cremation if that is possible or the costs of repatriating the body
- Provide a list of local and international funeral directors. Please note that in some countries a lack of suitable storage may make it impossible to get the necessary international certificates to transport the body
- Help to transfer money from relatives or friends in the UK to pay for any necessary costs

For information on the location of the British Embassy in the country where the deceased died or for more information on what to do when someone dies abroad visit the Foreign and Commonwealth website:

www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/death-abroad.

Conclusion

This factsheet should provide you with all the information you require to register a death whether it occurred in: England and Wales; Scotland; Northern Ireland; or elsewhere.

If after you have registered the death you need some information to help you organise their funeral please do ask us for our factsheet on arranging a funeral.

Do remember too that if you have been named as an executor in the deceased's will the team at Moss Solicitors can provide you with full advice and undertake probate work on your behalf if you so wish.

Let us know if you think we can help. You can contact us on 01509 635467, or at www.woodgatefp.co.uk.

This factsheet is provided for general information only and the contents should not be construed as advice.

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