

A . B .
WALKER

INITIAL GUIDANCE

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Contents

About AB Walker	page 2
What to do when someone dies	page 3
Registering a death.....	pages 4 - 5
Arranging the funeral.....	page 6
Loss and bereavement support	page 7

About AB Walker

We are an independent funeral director with branches across Berkshire and South Oxfordshire. Founded in 1826, we are one of the oldest family businesses in Berkshire and remain family owned and operated today. We are proud of our heritage and use the experience and knowledge this has given us to serve you and our local community.

Our compassionate and professional team are here to help you with all aspects related to a funeral. From pre-planning, to arranging the funeral itself, to bereavement aftercare and even monumental masonry and memorialisation; we offer choice and flexibility so we can deliver the right options for you. We are committed to providing high standards of service, showing care and respect in all we do.

Recognising that needs change, we believe it's important to innovate. In 2010 we created [MemoryGiving.com](https://www.MemoryGiving.com) to allow families and friends to make in-memory donations and leave messages online. To date, we have helped collect nearly £18m in donations with a further £3m potential Gift Aid for charities as well as connect donor messages of support to over 84,500 bereaved families.

Continuing to look forward we are aiming to be net zero by 2026, our bicentenary. As a generation that considers themselves custodians of both a business and a planet, we wish to lead efforts to deliver environmentally sustainable funeral services and we now measure the impact of all that we do. We have invested in electric cars, offer more sustainable products and employ renewable energy.

What To Do When Someone Dies

When someone dies we understand that it's a difficult and distressing time. We're here to help support and guide you through what you need to do - we're just a phone call away. The initial steps you need to take will vary depending on where the death occurred. We'll take you through it:

At home

If the death occurs at home, you'll need to contact the doctor to come out and confirm the death. You may then wish to contact us to take the person who has died into our care. We will collect and care for your loved one until the day of the funeral. During this time we will assist with funeral arrangements, support you with completing paperwork, and clarify the legal procedures.

In a care home

When a death occurs in a care home or hospice, they will usually complete the initial steps for you. This includes informing the next of kin if they're not already present, contacting the doctor to confirm the death, and contacting us to take the person who has died into our care. Once we have them in our care we will phone you to let you know. We will then assist you with planning the funeral and support you with completing the paperwork.

In a hospital

If the death occurs in a hospital, the attending physician will confirm the death. They will also contact the next of kin if they're not present. You may then wish to contact us. We can care for your loved one until the day of the funeral. We will assist you with planning the funeral and support you with completing the paperwork.

Unexpected or sudden death

In the case of an unexpected or sudden death, the first step is for a medical professional to confirm the death. The relevant authority will refer the death to the coroner - that could be the doctor, the police, the paramedics, the hospital or the medical examiner, depending on the circumstances. You may then wish to contact us to start to plan the funeral. We will support you through the process.

Registering a Death

Before you can register a death, a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is normally issued. The issuing of this certificate involves a new Medical Examiner Service which is currently being introduced. This process is outlined below but we can guide you through how this works.

What is the Medical Examiner Service?

The Medical Examiner is an independent senior Doctor. Their role is to review the medical records, speak to the treating Doctor and together agree on the wording for the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

Within a few days of the death, the Medical Examiner's office will contact you by phone. During the call, they will explain to you what the cause of death will be recorded as, or if a Coroner referral is required. You will also have the opportunity to raise any questions about the cause of death or the care received.

Provided a Coroner referral is not required, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be sent to the register (registry) office local to the place of death.

A Medical Examiner Officer will then call you to provide you with a six digit reference code. You will need to quote this code when making your appointment with the Registrar.

How to register a death

You usually need to register a person's death within five days. Registration could be delayed if the death is referred to the coroner, but you can still start to arrange the funeral during this time.

You will need to make an appointment at a registry office in the area where the person died. We can let you know which is the local office. You can use another registry office if you prefer but it may take longer to get the necessary documents and this could delay the funeral arrangements.

The appointment with the registrar will take about 30 minutes.

Who can register a death?

A relative of the person who has died will usually register the death. The death can also be registered by:

- Someone who was present when the death occurred
- An occupant of the house/official from the care home/ hospice/ hospital where the death occurred
- The person making the funeral arrangements.

Registering a Death

What do I need to take with me to register the death?

There are several documents and certain information that you will need to provide to the registrar:

Documents

- Birth certificate
- Marriage / civil partnership certificate (if they were married)
- NHS Medical Card (if available).

Information

- The reference code provided by the GP or medical examiner
- The deceased's full name and any names previously used, including maiden name, if applicable
- Their date and place of birth (town and county if born in the UK; country if born abroad)
- Date and place of death
- Their address
- Their occupation
- The full name, date of birth and occupation of a surviving spouse or civil partner if applicable
- Whether they were receiving a state pension or any other state benefit
- Your name and address.

What will the registrar issue?

The registrar will provide you with:

- A death certificate
- A Certificate for Burial or Cremation (called the 'green form') for the funeral director
- Form BD8 relating to the DSS and state pension.

They will also explain the Government's 'Tell Us Once Service' to you. This service allows you to report a death to most government offices in one go.

You may wish to purchase extra copies of the death certificate to satisfy bank, insurance and pension requirements.

Arranging the Funeral

From the moment we receive your call, we'll be here to support you. There's some information we need to take when you call so that we can help you through the initial steps.

We'll also arrange a meeting with you to start to plan the funeral. There are a few aspects you'll need to think about when planning the service. We'll guide you through everything involved, meeting your needs with care, compassion and professionalism.

Whatever type of funeral you choose, you can be sure that we'll help make it a respectful occasion, tailored to honour the life of the person who has died and comfort their loved ones.

More detailed information is available on our website: www.abwalker.co.uk/arranging-a-funeral

Funeral prices

Funeral costs are made up of two elements:

- The funeral director's fees (our professional fees)
- Third party costs (disbursements) – such as doctor's fees, cemetery or crematorium charges, flowers, and funeral notices.

The price of a funeral therefore varies, depending on the type of funeral and the different aspects of the service you choose. When we meet with you and discuss your requirements for the funeral, we will provide you with an itemised estimate and explain each cost before we proceed. All our prices are transparent with no hidden extras or fees.

Depending on the funeral type we will either ask for a deposit or payment in full before the funeral to pay the third parties to secure their services.

Government help may be available to pay for a funeral. If you wish to make a claim for a contribution towards funeral costs through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), we can offer advice and prepare the required invoice.

Loss and Bereavement Support

Our support extends beyond arranging the funeral to help those experiencing grief after the loss of a loved one.

Grief is a natural reaction to loss and affects everyone differently. We understand this and offer different levels of loss and bereavement support to meet varying needs:

- GriefChat, a live online bereavement support service available through our website that allows you to speak to a qualified, professional, bereavement counsellor
- Investigate your feelings for yourself with our guides and bereavement resources
- If you're struggling to come to terms with a loss we run The Link, our bereavement group course. The course is free and consists of six weekly group sessions run by trained facilitators.

For more information on our loss and bereavement support visit www.abwalker.co.uk/supporting-you



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The Funeral People

From traditional service to modern celebration

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