

St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Parish

Oro Valley, Arizona

1. Report the Death

You must report a death to the proper authorities to begin the death certification process, which is jointly completed by a doctor or coroner and a funeral director. You'll need multiple copies of the death certificate in order to do most of the tasks involved in disposition of the body, settling the estate, and wrapping up other affairs (like bank accounts and insurance).

- If you're at a hospital, nursing home, or hospice, they will know what to do and can lead you through the proper steps, and will begin to complete the death certificate.
- If you've already been in touch with a funeral home, call them so they can get the process started.
- When you have no other options, call 911. Be aware that you'll need a funeral director to claim the body for burial or cremation.
- If the person who died was an organ donor, inform the appropriate authorities so they can preserve the organs and prep them for donation.

For Hospital and End-of-Life Facilities: Clean out the Deceased's Residence

If the person who died was living in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or hospice facility, there may be rules about how much time you have to remove the deceased's personal property from his or her room. In order to avoid the potentially substantial charges that may result from insurance or Medicaid being discontinued.

2. Prepare To Work With A Funeral Director

You need to engage a funeral director to complete the death certificate and properly transport and store the remains. Most hospitals, nursing homes, and hospices require the removal of the body within a few hours after death.

Two questions you'll need to answer:

- Will the body be buried or cremated?
- What type of funeral service will you be having?

If the person who died made funeral plans before death, work directly with the particular funeral home and be aware of any pre-payments so you don't get double charged. Speaking of money... As soon as a bank is notified of the death, any of the deceased's accounts will be frozen until processed in probate. If you've been using their cash to pay their expenses, you may want to withdraw money from their bank account while you still can.

3. Types of Service: Funeral vs. Memorial vs. Graveside

- A funeral is when you have a service before the body is buried or cremated.
- A memorial service is when you have a service after the body has been buried or cremated.
- A graveside service is just like a funeral only it takes place on the gravesite.

Regardless of the type of service, you'll need to choose a location for the service.

What If The Death Occurs Far Away From Home?

If the death occurred far away from where the burial will take place, you will need to work with a funeral director in the place the person died as well as a funeral director at the destination to make transportation arrangements. If you are planning a cremation followed by a memorial service at a later date, the body can be cremated in the city where the person died and the cremated remains can be shipped to you. If you are planning a cremation that will take place after a funeral service, you'll need to work with funeral homes to coordinate the transportation of the body.

4. Make Cemetery Arrangements

If you are planning a burial, you'll need to decide where the burial will take place. If the person who died didn't make cemetery arrangements, that is, a pre-purchased a plot or space in a mausoleum, you will need to purchase a cemetery plot or a space in a mausoleum.

5. Make Funeral Arrangements

The funeral home will contact our parish and arrange the funeral or other memorial if you wish. If not, you can contact Jan Traficanti at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish by calling 520.469.7835.

Choose the Type of Service You'll Have

After you decide how you're going to inter the body, you'll need to decide if you want to have a ceremony around the interment—generally either a funeral (before the burial or cremation), a graveside service (at the interment), or memorial service (after the burial or cremation). Pre-funeral events generally include a viewing, wake, or visitation. Post-funeral events generally include receptions or gatherings.

6. Inform The Family and Write Death Notice

Depending on the method of notification that you'll be using, you may need access to the deceased's address book or email account. As these calls can be emotionally difficult, it can be helpful to develop a script, or jot down talking points, so you make sure you provide all necessary information. Identify a point-person from each main social area of the deceased's life (work, clubs, etc.) and ask that person to inform the other members of that group. To get the word out to a larger audience, a death notice is a paid announcement you place in a newspaper or on a website that notifies people of the death and any services that will be held.

Our parish wants to post both an obituary and photograph of your loved one in our parish media. We take seriously the works of mercy including praying for the dead and the care and support of their family and friends. Please see the download for the parish obituary that is on this page.

7. A Rundown of Possible Pre-Funeral Tasks

Prepare Yourself: Figure out what you'll wear to the funeral. If you need to purchase an outfit or have an outfit dry cleaned, these are tasks that someone else may be able to handle for you.

Gather Personal Items: If a photograph or photographs of the person who died will be displayed at the service, collect those photos. If you will have a guestbook at the service, remember to bring the guestbook and pens.

Choose Pallbearers: If any people whom you would like to have as pallbearers are not physically capable of carrying the weight of a casket, those people can be made "honorary pallbearers" and can walk beside or behind the casket.

Choose Readings and/or Music: If you would like people to deliver specific readings or prayers, choose those readings. If you will have a singer, choir, or band/ensemble perform at the service,

Purchase a Guestbook: Guestbooks allow the family to know who attended the funeral, and you may purchase one from the funeral home or from a stationery store. Guestbooks are usually placed at the entrance to the service venue. The funeral home may provide one.