

Diocese of Victoria Health Care Committee

## **What Families Need to Know Before and After a Loved One Enters Eternal Life**

### **Before Death: What to Know and Do**

#### **Spiritual Support**

- ☐ Would your loved one like a visit from a priest or pastoral care visitor?
- ☐ Would they like to receive the Sacrament of the Sick and Viaticum? (Holy Communion for the journey)

#### **Advance Care Planning**

- ☐ Does your loved one have an Advance Care Directive?  
*(A legal document outlining what medical care they consent to or refuse if they cannot speak for themselves.)*
- ☐ Have they prepared an Emergency Medical Information Package ("ICE" package)?  
*(Typically placed in a folder on the fridge for paramedics; includes medical info and care wishes.)*
- ☐ Is there a signed Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order?  
*(Without this form, paramedics must attempt resuscitation. Find the form here:  
[www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/forms/302fil.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/forms/302fil.pdf))*

#### **Important Documents to Locate**

- ☐ You will need to determine if there is a Will or request a Will Search (through Vital Statistics)
- ☐ Birth certificate, citizenship, or immigration documents
- ☐ Marriage/divorce/separation papers
- ☐ Funeral or service wishes
- ☐ Financial records (e.g., bank, pension, mortgage)
- ☐ House deed, vehicle registration
- ☐ Life insurance policies

#### **Vital Statistics Information**

- ☐ Full legal name
- ☐ Date of birth
- ☐ Personal Health Number & Social Insurance Number
- ☐ Occupation
- ☐ Spouse/partner's name (if applicable)
- ☐ Parents' names and birthplaces

## When Death Occurs

1. When a loved one dies, a trained healthcare professional needs to verify the death.
2. If the death was unexpected, contact emergency services: 911
3. Contact a Funeral Home to collect the deceased person
  - Make an appointment with someone at the Funeral Home.
  - ☐ If no funeral home is involved, call Vital Statistics to register the death: 1-888-876-1633
4. If the person died in hospital:
  - CALL the Hospital or Care Home to give them PERMISSION to ☐ release the body.
5. If it was the wish of the deceased person to have a Church Service, it is important to contact the Parish Office to inquire when the Priest is available.

## Expected Death at Home

If death is expected, the physician can complete a Notification of Expected Death in the Home form:

[www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/forms/3987fil.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/forms/3987fil.pdf)

This allows the body to be released to the funeral home without pronouncement of death.

## First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Customs & Considerations

Each community may have its own traditions and ways of honouring the dying and the deceased.

**Find the full resource booklet at:**

**[www.rcdvictoria.org/a-catholic-perspective](http://www.rcdvictoria.org/a-catholic-perspective)**

