

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)

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

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 more resources at:

www.rcdvictoria.org/care-of-the-dying

