



إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn. Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return. Qur'ān, al-Baqarah 2:156

We are sorry. Here is what happens next.



As soon as you can, call your masjid's funeral committee.

They will arrange the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial, and tell you which funeral director to use.

You do not have to do this alone, or all at once. Your masjid has done this many times. Follow the steps in order, and open each one when you reach it.

New

This guide is new and under review by people in Australia. Each state and territory has its own rules on registering a death, coroners, burial and probate; the notes for each are drawn from official pages and say when they were checked, and where we could not confirm a rule we say so. If something is wrong or out of date where you live, please tell us at hello@lifeistemporary.com.

WHERE YOU ARE

Each state and territory has its own rules for registering a death, coroners and estates. Choose yours to see them.

New South Wales · Victoria · Queensland · Western Australia · South Australia · Australian Capital Territory · Tasmania · Northern Territory

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Have the death confirmed

In the first hour

The death has to be verified before anything else can happen. This is usually done by a doctor; in New South Wales a nurse, midwife or paramedic can do it when no doctor is available. A doctor separately certifies the cause of death, unless the death goes to the coroner.

- ☐ In a hospital, hospice or aged care home, the staff arrange for the death to be verified
- ☐ At home and expected, call their doctor
- ☐ At home and unexpected, call 000
- ☐ Tell the staff early that the family needs a quick burial for religious reasons

WHO TO CALL

If the death was unexpected, call 000. If it was expected, call their doctor. In a hospital, hospice or aged care, the staff arrange it. Services Australia, Who to tell when someone dies

WHO VERIFIES

In the New South Wales health system a doctor verifies the death, but where no doctor is available a registered nurse, registered midwife or qualified paramedic can. Only a doctor completes the certificate of the cause of death. Other states have their own rules. NSW Health, Verification of death and medical certificate of cause of death (PD2023_014)

and

Close the eyes, cover the body, make duʿā

In the first hour · at the same time as the step above

Gently and without hurry. Those present can do this while the calls are made.

- ☐ Close the eyes and the mouth
- ☐ Straighten the arms and legs
- ☐ Cover the body with a clean sheet
- ☐ Pray for them, and say only good

EVIDENCE

The Prophet ﷺ closed the eyes of Abū Salamah and prayed for him. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 920

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Call the mosque's funeral service

In the first few hours

Many mosques and Islamic societies run a funeral service. They arrange the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial, and help with the paperwork.

- ☐ Call the mosque's funeral service or the imam
- ☐ Tell them where the body is and who the next of kin is
- ☐ Agree a time for the ghusl and the janazah prayer

[Find a Muslim funeral service >](#)

NO NUMBER?

Use the Australian directory, or call the nearest large mosque. They will know who to call.

The doctor certifies the cause of death PAPERWORK

In the first day

A doctor completes a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD). It goes to the funeral director, or whoever is arranging the burial, and is needed to register the death. If the death has to be reported to the coroner, the coroner deals with it instead.

- ☐ Tell the doctor that the family needs a quick burial for religious reasons
- ☐ Give them a phone number that will be answered
- ☐ Ask who the certificate will be sent to
- ☐ Ask any questions you have about the cause of death

THE LAW

In Victoria, a medical practitioner must certify a death by completing the certificate, and an unexpected death must be reported to police and goes to the coroner. Victorian Department of Health, What to do after someone dies

WITHIN 48 HOURS

In Western Australia and Tasmania the doctor must issue the certificate within 48 hours, unless the death is referred to the coroner. See the notes for your state or territory below. WA Government, Death Registration and Certificates ; Tasmania Department of Justice, How to register a death

Ask whether the coroner is involved PAPERWORK

If the death was sudden

If the death was sudden, unexpected or unexplained, it is reported to the coroner, usually through the police. The coroner decides when to release the body, and may order a post-mortem (autopsy), which can delay the burial.

- ☐ Ask the hospital or police whether the death has gone to the coroner
- ☐ Tell the police officer or the coroner's office at once that the family needs a quick burial and objects to an autopsy for religious reasons

WHO DECIDES

In New South Wales the senior next of kin is set by an order in the law, not chosen by the family: the spouse or de facto partner, then an adult child, then a parent, then an adult brother or sister. That person can nominate someone else to act for them. Ask the coroner's office how it works in your state or territory. Coroners Court of NSW, Senior next of kin

- ☐ Ask the coroner's office who counts as the senior next of kin in your state or territory and what the time limit is: only that person can object, so they should do it at once
- ☐ Ask whether a CT scan or an external examination can be used instead of an internal post-mortem
- ☐ Do not fix a time for the janazah until the coroner confirms when the body will be released

OBJECTING

In most states and territories the senior next of kin can object, usually in writing, giving religious reasons. The time limits differ: Western Australia asks within 24 hours of receiving the coroner's brochure, Victoria within 48 hours of the autopsy order. Coroners Court of Victoria, Forensic process ; Coroner's Court of Western Australia, Objecting to a Post-Mortem Examination

IF THE CORONER STILL ORDERS IT

In New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory the senior next of kin then has 48 hours to apply to the Supreme Court. In Western Australia it is 2 clear working days. Coroners Court of NSW, Objecting to a post mortem ; NT Government, When an autopsy is ordered

LESS INVASIVE

Coroners in several states use CT scans, and New South Wales says the family's religious and cultural needs are considered when choosing the type of examination. Coroners Court of NSW, Post mortem ; Coroner's Court of Western Australia, Post-Mortem Examinations

Register the death PAPERWORK

Usually after the burial

Every death must be registered with the Births, Deaths and Marriages registry in your state or territory. If you use a funeral director, they usually register it for you, using the doctor's certificate (or the coroner's papers) and the details the family gives them.

- ☐ Give the funeral director the personal details they ask for, and check them carefully
- ☐ Ask them to register the death and order the death certificate
- ☐ If no funeral director is involved, contact the registry to register the death yourself
- ☐ Ask the funeral director or the registry what the deadline is in your state or territory

WHERE YOU LIVE

Who to contact, the time limits and the after-hours numbers differ by state and territory. See the notes for your state or territory below. If they are not there, ask the coroner's court in your state at once.

WHO REGISTERS

The funeral director usually registers the death for you. Queensland and the ACT explain how a family can register a death itself.

Services Australia, What to do when someone dies ; Queensland Government, Register a death

DEADLINES

Queensland: within 14 days. Western Australia: within 14 days of the funeral. South Australia: within 7 days of the burial. Northern Territory: within 7 working days of the burial. The pages we read for New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and Tasmania give no deadline, so check with the registry in your state.

Queensland Government, Register a death ; SA Government, Register a death

Arrange the funeral service and the grave PAPERWORK

Within the first day

The mosque's service or a Muslim funeral director usually collects the body and arranges the grave with the cemetery.

- ☐ Confirm the body can be washed by Muslims at their premises
- ☐ Ask for no embalming and no viewing
- ☐ Ask the cemetery about its Muslim section
- ☐ Ask the cemetery whether burial in the shroud without a coffin is allowed in your state or territory, and what it needs

WITHOUT A COFFIN

In New South Wales a coffin is required unless NSW Health approves burial without one, and some cemeteries already have an arrangement for their community, so ask the cemetery first. A coffin is still used until the body is placed in the grave. We could not confirm the rule in other states: ask the cemetery. Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW, Burial without a conventional coffin (17 June 2026) ; NSW Health, Burial of a deceased person in a grave without a coffin

A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

New South Wales and Victoria say you do not have to use a funeral director. Whoever arranges the burial then takes on the legal duties, so most families use a Muslim funeral service. NSW Government, A guide to arranging a funeral ; Victorian Department of Health, What to do after someone dies

and

Wash and shroud the body

Within the first day • at the same time as the step above

Done by trained Muslims of the same sex, or by the spouse. The funeral service usually provides the cloth.

- ☐ Confirm who will wash

A SPOUSE MAY WASH

The Prophet ﷺ told 'Ā'ishah that if she died before him he would wash and shroud her himself. Sunan Ibn Mājah 1465 (ḥasan)

☐ Confirm the kafan is ready

How the washing and shroud are done >

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The janazah prayer and the burial

As soon as possible

The prayer is often held after one of the daily prayers, and the burial follows straight after.

☐ Tell family and community the time of the prayer

☐ Confirm the grave in a Muslim cemetery or Muslim section

☐ Ask the price of the grave and the burial fee

How to pray the janazah prayer >

HASTE

The Prophet ﷺ told us to hurry with the funeral. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1315

MUSLIM CEMETERIES

The directory lists Muslim funeral services and cemeteries across Australia. [Open ↗](#)

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Get copies of the death certificate PAPERWORK

In the first weeks

Banks, super funds, insurers and Services Australia will each want proof of death. The certificate comes from the registry once the death is registered.

☐ Ask the funeral director to order the death certificate when they register the death

☐ Order more from the registry in your state or territory if you need them

☐ Have copies certified by a Justice of the Peace

☐ Keep a list of who has been sent a copy

CERTIFIED COPIES

Services Australia suggests having copies of the death certificate certified by a Justice of the Peace, as organisations will ask for them. *Services Australia, What to do when someone dies*

COST

Fees differ by state. In Western Australia a certified death certificate costs \$60. *WA Government, Death Registration and Certificates*

Pay the funeral costs and list every debt

In the first weeks

The funeral is paid from the estate first, then the debts. Nothing is inherited until both are settled.

- ☐ Pay the funeral costs from the estate
- ☐ List loans, bills and money owed to family
- ☐ Ask a scholar about any unpaid zakat

THE ORDER

Funeral, then debts, then bequests from a third, then the heirs. al-Sirājiyyah (al-Sajāwandī), opening chapter

HELP WITH COSTS

Services Australia makes no extra lump-sum payment when a single person dies. A surviving partner may be able to get a bereavement payment; see the next step. Services Australia, What help there is when an adult dies

and

Find the will, and tell Services Australia PAPERWORK

In the first weeks · at the same time as the step above

The executor named in the will leads what follows. Services Australia, the tax office and any super fund each need to be told.

- ☐ Check papers at home, email, and with any lawyer
- ☐ Tell Services Australia within 28 days: by phone, with the Advice of death form (SA116), or at a service centre
- ☐ Use the free Australian Death Notification Service to tell many organisations at once
- ☐ Phone the ATO, and find out which super funds held their super
- ☐ Secure the house and car, and keep the phone line active for sign-in codes

BEREAVEMENT PAYMENT

A partner may get a lump-sum bereavement payment if both were getting an income support payment for at least the previous 12 months, or a pension. It is worked out over 14 weeks from the day of the death. Services Australia, What help there is when an adult dies ; Services Australia, Who to tell when someone dies

SUPER

Super is paid by the fund's trustee, not by the will alone. A binding nomination directs it; without one, the trustee chooses among the dependants or pays it to the executor. Contact each fund early. Australian Taxation Office, Superannuation death benefits

Settle and divide the estate PAPERWORK

In the months after

Probate is handled by the Supreme Court of your state or territory, so the steps depend on your state or territory. A small estate may need no grant, but a bank or the ATO may still ask for one.

- ☐ Apply for probate or letters of administration if the estate needs it
- ☐ Close accounts and cancel subscriptions
- ☐ Pay any bequest, up to one third, to people who are not heirs
- ☐ Divide the rest by the fixed shares

[See how the estate divides >](#)

TAX

There is no inheritance tax in Australia. The executor may need to lodge a “date of death” tax return, on paper because myTax cannot be used, and should finalise tax before sharing out the estate. Australian Taxation Office, Doing a final tax return for the deceased person ; Australian Taxation Office, Checklist: what to do when someone dies

ONE THIRD

A bequest is limited to a third, and an heir cannot receive one. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2742 ; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* 2870 (ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ)

SMALL ESTATES

A small estate may not need probate, but those holding its assets, including the ATO, may still ask for it. Settling an estate typically takes 6 to 12 months. Australian Taxation Office, Checklist: what to do when someone dies

Look after the family

Four months and ten days

Mourning is kept to three days, except by a widow, who mourns four months and ten days, the length of her 'iddah, or until she gives birth if she is pregnant.

- ☐ Bring food and help with the household
- ☐ Help the widow with errands and appointments
- ☐ Make du'ā for the one who has died

What to say and do when you visit >

PROBATE DIFFERS

New South Wales: apply within 6 months of the death unless there is a reasonable explanation. Victoria: advertise online at least 15 days before applying. The ACT: publish a notice 14 days to 3 months before filing. See the notes for your state or territory. NSW Government, Get a grant of probate or letters of administration ; Supreme Court of Victoria, How to apply for a grant of probate or administration

SUPER AND THE SHARES

Super that a fund trustee pays straight to a dependant does not pass through the will, so it may not follow the fixed shares unless it is paid to the estate. Ask a lawyer and a scholar how to bring it in line. Australian Taxation Office, Superannuation death benefits

EVIDENCE

No mourning beyond three days except for a husband: four months and ten days. A pregnant widow's term ends with the birth. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1280 ; Qur'ān, al-Ṭalāq 65:4

FOOD

Prepare food for the family, for what has happened has occupied them. Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3132 (ḥasan)

Write your own Islamic will

For those left behind

Without a valid will, the law of your state or territory decides who inherits, not the fixed shares. An Islamic will is an ordinary will that directs the estate by the shares.

- ☐ Follow your state's signing rules: in New South Wales, 2 adult witnesses present when you sign
- ☐ Do not leave anything to a witness
- ☐ Ask your super fund about a binding nomination, since super does not follow the will by itself
- ☐ Ask a lawyer who writes Islamic wills

[Draft the shares to take to a lawyer >](#)

'IDDAH DATES

Work out when four months and ten days have passed, by the Hijri and the Western calendar. [Open ↗](#)

VALID WILL

In New South Wales a will must be in writing, signed by you, and witnessed by 2 adults present when you sign. Choose witnesses who are not beneficiaries: a gift to a witness is normally void, subject to some exceptions in the law. Other states have their own rules, so check with a lawyer in your state. NSW Government, [Learn about wills](#) ; Succession Act 2006 (NSW), s 10

FAMILY CLAIMS

Certain family members can ask the court for more than the will gives them: in New South Wales within 12 months of the death, in Victoria within 6 months of the grant of probate. A will that follows the shares can still be challenged. [Legal Aid NSW, Family provision claims](#) ; [Victoria Legal Aid, Challenging a will](#)

General guidance, not a fatwa or legal advice. Rules on registering a death, burial and estates differ between states and territories; your funeral director and a lawyer can confirm them.

Last reviewed October 2026. Something wrong? Tell us