

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ

Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn. Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return. Qurʾān, 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 company 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 has not yet been reviewed by people in Austria. If something here is wrong or out of date where you live, please tell us at hello@lifeistemporary.com.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS IN AUSTRIA

Anzeige des Todes at the Standesamt

The death must be reported to the Standesamt of the place of death at the latest on the next working day. The hospital head or the examining doctor is first in the order of duty, and the funeral company can usually do it for you. Reporting is free; each death certificate costs €11 plus €2.10 (fees checked 10 October 2026). Personenstandsgesetz 2013, § 28; oesterreich.gv.at, Anzeige des Todesfalls; Todesfall in einer Wohnung; Ausstellung einer Sterbeurkunde

Totenbeschau, prosecutor and autopsy

Every death must be reported at once to the examining doctor (Totenbeschau), usually the municipal doctor, and the body must not be changed before the examination. If a natural death is not certain, the police report to the prosecutor, who can order an autopsy when a crime cannot be ruled out. The body is then usually released a few days after the death. Ask the prosecutor's office early, in writing, for a quick release. oesterreich.gv.at, Totenbeschau; Todesfall in einer Wohnung; Todesfall an einem öffentlichen Ort; Strafprozeßordnung 1975, § 128

Burial times and burial abroad

Burial times are set by each state, and exceptions need separate approval. Upper Austria: after 48 and before 96 hours from the death, or within 10 days if cooled. Lower Austria: within 4 days of the death certificate, or 10 days if cooled. Vienna: the body may be kept in a mortuary or hospital cooling for no more than four weeks; the Islamic Cemetery buries Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 14:30, unless its administration sets another time. Ask the funeral company for your state. oesterreich.gv.at, Bestattung; Oö. LBG § 15; NÖ Bestattungsgesetz 2007, § 11; WLBG § 10; IFH Wien Bestattungsanlagenordnung 2025

Burial times and burial abroad

To bury abroad, the death is first registered, then a licensed funeral company gets a multilingual body passport (Leichenpass), in most states from the district authority of the place of death and in Vienna from the city. Upper Austria requires a soldered metal coffin, or a wooden one with an impermeable lining sealed airtight, for such transport. The destination country's rules decide

	any further documents. Repatriation can be very expensive: the estate usually pays, or the family if there is no money in it. Ask the funeral company what it costs and who signs before you agree. oesterreich.gv.at, Leichenpass; Todesfall/Bestattung im Ausland; WLBG § 17; Oö. LBG § 23
Coffin, cemetery and graves	The state laws we read require a coffin: Vienna for burial in the earth, and Upper Austria for all burials. The Islamic Cemetery in Vienna uses a simple wooden coffin, does the washing in its own washing room with washers provided by the funeral company, and leases graves for 10 years, renewable for 10. Linz has a Muslim field with a washing room; Altach in Vorarlberg has an Islamic cemetery for Vorarlberg residents. Earth graves are usually leased for 10 years. WLBG § 29; Oö. LBG § 19; IFH Wien Bestattungsanlagenordnung 2025; LINZ AG; Gemeinde Altach (2026); oesterreich.gv.at, Graberwerb
The Verlassenschaftsverfahren and the notary	The Standesamt tells the district court, and a notary acting as the court's commissioner (Gerichtskommissär) invites the family to a first meeting and checks the central register of wills or the lawyers' register. At the end the court hands over the estate in a decision (Einantwortungsbeschluss). Without a will, children inherit equally and a husband or wife takes a third beside them. Children and a spouse left out by a will can claim half of their legal share, so ask the notary how the heirs can follow the Islamic shares. oesterreich.gv.at, Verlassenschaftsverfahren; Gerichtskommissärsgesetz § 1; ABGB §§ 732, 744, 757, 759
Small estates	If the estate has no assets, or assets worth no more than €5,000, and nothing needs entering in the public registers, the estate is not formally administered (Abhandlung) unless someone asks for the procedure to continue. Außerstreitgesetz, § 153
Help with funeral costs	We did not find a general state death grant. Funeral costs are a charge on the estate. If neither the family nor the estate can pay, a social funeral is held, in principle paid by the state or municipality; confirm coverage with the municipality before ordering. If the estate is too small, funeral costs up to €20,000 can be claimed as an extraordinary expense in the payer's tax return.

oesterreich.gv.at, Bestattung; Steuerliche Absetzbarkeit von Bestattungskosten; ABGB § 549

From official sources, checked October 2026. Laws change; your funeral company and a notary can confirm them.

WHERE YOU ARE

Austria has one federal law for registering a death and for inheritance, and this guide describes it. Burial law is made by each of the nine states (Bundesländer), so burial times, coffin rules and grave terms differ by state. We name the rules we checked for Vienna, Lower Austria and Upper Austria. For any other state, ask the funeral company (Bestattung) or the municipality.

1

Have the death confirmed

In the first hour

Every death must be reported at once to the doctor who examines the dead (Totenbeschau), usually the municipal doctor. The doctor fills in the form “Anzeige des Todes”, which contains the death certificate, and releases the body. Nothing about the body may be changed before then, not even its clothes.

- [ ] In a hospital or care home, the staff arrange the examination
- [ ] At home, call a doctor straight away, or ask a funeral company to arrange it
- [ ] If the death was violent or unexplained, call the police
- [ ] In an emergency, call 144 or 112

WHO EXAMINES

The examining doctor, usually the municipal doctor. The rules are set by each state, so deadlines and procedures differ. oesterreich.gv.at, Totenbeschau (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

AT HOME

Call a doctor straight away. Do not wash or change the body before the examination. The funeral company can usually arrange the examination and the registration for you. oesterreich.gv.at, Todesfall in einer Wohnung (letzte Aktualisierung 13. März 2026)

- [ ] Tell the staff early that the family needs a quick burial for religious reasons

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

2

Call the mosque's funeral service

In the first few hours

Many mosques and Muslim funeral services help with the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial, and know which funeral company (Bestattung) to use. Some mosque associations run their own funeral funds.

- [ ] Call the mosque's funeral service or the imam
- [ ] Tell them where the body is and who the next of kin is
- [ ] If the deceased paid into a funeral fund, call it before you choose a funeral company
- [ ] Agree a time for the ghusl and the janazah prayer

NO NUMBER?

Call the nearest large mosque. They will know who to call.

FUNERAL FUNDS

The ATIB fund helps members with burial in Austria and transport to Türkiye. It tells members not to start with another funeral company without its approval, and says it is not insurance. ATIB Cenaze Fonu (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

3

Ask whether the prosecutor is involved PAPERWORK

If the death was sudden or violent

If a natural death is not certain, the police call a doctor and report to the public prosecutor (Staatsanwaltschaft). If a crime cannot be ruled out, the prosecutor can order an autopsy (Obduktion) at a forensic medicine institute. The body is usually released only some days later.

- [ ] Ask the police or the doctor where the body has been taken
- [ ] Ask the prosecutor's office early, in writing, to release the body quickly for religious reasons
- [ ] Contact a funeral company straight away, even while you wait

A JUDICIAL AUTOPSY
It is allowed when a crime cannot be ruled out, and the prosecutor orders it. We have not found a rule that lets the family refuse it on religious grounds. Strafprozeßordnung 1975, § 128 (Fassung vom 10. Oktober 2026)

WAITING
After an unclear or violent death the body goes to a forensic institute or hospital for an autopsy, and is usually released a few days after the death. oesterreich.gv.at, Todesfall an einem öffentlichen Ort (letzte Aktualisierung 13. März 2026)

VIENNA: A HEALTH AUTOPSY
The city can also order an autopsy when it is needed for important public-health reasons and the cause cannot be found another way. Afterwards the cuts must be carefully sewn and the body cleaned. Wiener Leichen- und Bestattungsgesetz (WLBG), § 12

4

Register the death at the Standesamt PAPERWORK

By the next working day

The death must be reported to the civil registry office (Standesamt) of the place of death, at the latest on the next working day. A hospital or the examining doctor usually reports it. The funeral company can also do this for you.

THE DEADLINE
At the latest on the next working day after the death. Personenstandsgesetz 2013, § 28 (Fassung vom 10. Oktober 2026) ; oesterreich.gv.at, Anzeige des Todesfalls (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

- [ ] Ask the funeral company or the Standesamt which documents they need, such as the form “Anzeige des Todes” and the deceased’s documents
- [ ] If you report it yourself, bring ID, preferably official photo ID
- [ ] If the death was in a hospital or care home, ask the staff to confirm they have reported it

WHO REPORTS IT

In this order: the head of the hospital, the examining doctor, the authority investigating the death, then the husband or wife or other family. Personenstandsgesetz 2013, § 28 (Fassung vom 10. Oktober 2026)

COST

Reporting the death is free. A death certificate (Sterbeurkunde) costs €11 plus €2.10 (fees checked 10 October 2026). oesterreich.gv.at, Anzeige des Todesfalls (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

5 Choose the funeral company and the grave PAPERWORK

Within the first day

The body must be placed in the coffin by a licensed funeral company (Bestattung), and only licensed companies may move it. Ask what it will handle, what it costs and who signs before you agree. The coffin rules are set by each state. The state laws we read require a coffin, and we have not found a state that allows burial in a shroud alone.

- [ ] Ask the funeral company or the cemetery which Muslim cemetery or Muslim field is near you
- [ ] Ask where the washing can be done, and who may do it
- [ ] Ask how long the grave is leased for, and the renewal fee
- [ ] Ask for a written quote before you agree

LICENSED COMPANIES

Placing the body in the coffin must be done by an authorised funeral company, and bodies may be moved only by licensed funeral companies. oesterreich.gv.at, Allgemeines zur Einsargung und Beförderung (letzte Aktualisierung 12. März 2026) ; oesterreich.gv.at, Ausstellung einer Überführungsbewilligung/eines Leichenpasses (letzte Aktualisierung 12. März 2026)

A COFFIN

Vienna requires a tightly closed coffin of wood or similar material for burial in the earth. Upper Austria allows bodies to be moved, laid out and buried only in coffins. Wiener Leichen- und Bestattungsgesetz (WLBG), § 29 ; Oö. Leichenbestattungsgesetz 1985, § 19

VIENNA'S ISLAMIC CEMETERY

The Islamic Cemetery in Vienna (run by the Islamic Religious Community, IGGÖ) uses a simple wooden coffin. The washing is done only in its own washing room, by trained washers or imams provided by the funeral company. Family may take part with the company. A grave is leased for 10 years and can be renewed for another 10. Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, Bestattungsanlagenordnung des Islamischen Friedhofs Wien (Fassung 1. Jänner 2025)

OTHER STATES

In Upper Austria the Linz city cemetery has a Muslim field facing Mecca, a washing room and a prayer room. In Vorarlberg the Islamic Cemetery in Altach is for Muslims whose main home was in Vorarlberg; a grave is given only at the death, for 15 years. LINZ AG, Stadtfriedhof Linz/St. Martin (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Gemeinde Altach, Islamischer Friedhof Altach, Infoblatt 01/2026

HOW LONG A GRAVE LASTS

You lease a grave, you do not buy it. An earth grave is usually leased for 10 years, and can normally be renewed. oesterreich.gv.at, Graberwerb (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

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
- [ ] Confirm the kafan is ready

How the washing and shroud are done ›

SPOUSES

A wife may wash her husband: Ibn al-Mundhir reports consensus. Most scholars allow a husband to wash his wife, and the Prophet ﷺ told ʿĀʾishah that if she died before him he would wash her (Ibn Mājah 1465); the Ḥanafī school does not allow the husband to. Ibn Qudāmah, al-Mughnī (Ḥanbalī, with the other schools), 2:390 ; Ibn ʿĀbidīn, Radd al-Muḥtār (Ḥanafī), 2:198–199

6

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 field
- [ ] Ask the funeral company the earliest and latest time your state allows
- [ ] Ask the cemetery which days and hours it buries

How to pray the janazah prayer ›

HASTE

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

THE LAW

Upper Austria: after 48 hours and before 96 hours from the death, or within 10 days if the body is cooled. Lower Austria: within 4 days of the death certificate, or 10 days if the body is cooled. Oö. Leichenbestattungsgesetz 1985, § 15 (Fassung vom 10. Oktober 2026) ; NÖ Bestattungsgesetz 2007, § 11 (Fassung vom 10. Oktober 2026)

EXCEPTIONS

Burial times differ by state. Exceptions are possible but need separate approval; the funeral company can tell you more. oesterreich.gv.at, Bestattung (letzte Aktualisierung 13. März 2026)

VIENNA

After the examination the body must go to a cemetery mortuary, and may be kept there or in hospital cooling for no more than four weeks before burial. The Islamic Cemetery buries Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 14:30; its administration can set other times in individual cases.

Wiener Leichen- und Bestattungsgesetz (WLBG), § 10 (LGBl. Nr. 39/2023) ; Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, Bestattungsanlagenordnung des Islamischen Friedhofs Wien (Fassung 1. Jänner 2025)

SUNDAYS

Some cemeteries do not bury on Sundays and public holidays, for example the Islamic Cemetery in Altach.

Gemeinde Altach, Islamischer Friedhof Altach, Infoblatt 01/2026

and

If the burial will be abroad PAPERWORK

Before the coffin is closed · at the same time as the step above

Many families bury their dead in another country, for example in Türkiye, Bosnia or the Arab world. The death must first be registered at the Standesamt. A licensed funeral company then needs a multilingual body passport (Leichenpass).

- [ ] Tell the funeral company early that the burial will be abroad
- [ ] Call the consulate of the country early: it sets its own documents and conditions
- [ ] Ask the consulate whether it requires embalming
- [ ] Check any funeral fund or insurance first

BODY PASSPORT

In most states it comes from the district authority (Bezirkshauptmannschaft) of the place of death, or the city council in a statutory city. In Vienna the city issues it. oesterreich.gv.at, Ausstellung einer Überführungsbewilligung/eines Leichenpasses (letzte Aktualisierung 12. März 2026) ; Wiener Leichen- und Bestattungsgesetz (WLBG), § 17

THE COFFIN

Upper Austria, for example, requires a tightly closed metal coffin that is soldered, or a wooden coffin with an impermeable lining that is sealed airtight, for such transport. Oö. Leichenbestattungsgesetz 1985, § 23

THE CONSULATE

Each country sets its own requirements. Ask its consulate in Austria early, before the coffin is closed. oesterreich.gv.at, Ausstellung einer Überführungsbewilligung/eines Leichenpasses (letzte Aktualisierung 12. März 2026)

COST
Repatriation can be very expensive. The estate usually pays, or the family if there is no money in it. Ask the funeral company what it costs and who signs before you agree. oesterreich.gv.at, Todesfall/Bestattung im Ausland (letzte Aktualisierung 1. Jänner 2026)

7

Get copies of the death certificate PAPERWORK

In the first week

Banks, insurers and others often ask for a death certificate (Sterbeurkunde) from the Standesamt. Ask each one what proof it needs.

- [ ] Ask any Standesamt for copies, in person or in writing

WHO CAN ASK
The husband or wife, parents and grandparents, and children and grandchildren, or anyone with a legal interest. In person it is usually issued at once. Any Standesamt can issue it for deaths since 1939. Each costs €11 plus €2.10, and a written request costs €21 more (fees checked 10 October 2026). oesterreich.gv.at, Ausstellung einer Sterbeurkunde (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

8

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

FROM THE ESTATE

Austrian law counts a proper funeral, suited to local custom and to the deceased's means, as a charge on the estate. Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB), § 549

IF THE FAMILY CANNOT PAY

If neither the family nor the estate can cover the funeral, a social funeral (Sozialbestattung) is held, in principle paid by the state or municipality. Confirm what it covers with the municipality before ordering anything. Tell them clearly that the deceased was Muslim and must be buried.
oesterreich.gv.at, Bestattung (letzte Aktualisierung 13. März 2026)

TAX

If the estate is too small to pay, funeral costs of up to €20,000 can be claimed as an extraordinary expense in your own tax return.
oesterreich.gv.at, Steuerliche Absetzbarkeit von Bestattungskosten (letzte Aktualisierung 1. Jänner 2026)

and

Find the will PAPERWORK

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

You do not start the estate process yourself. The Standesamt tells the district court (Bezirksgericht), and a notary acting for the court (Gerichtskommissär) invites the family to a first meeting (Todesfallaufnahme), usually the person who ordered the funeral.

- [ ] Bring any will you find, and papers about the deceased's money and debts, to the notary's meeting
- [ ] Tell the employer, insurers and banks
- [ ] Secure the house and car, and keep the phone line active for sign-in codes

REGISTER OF WILLS

The notary checks the central register of wills, or the Austrian lawyers' register of wills, for any will. The notary or lawyer keeping a registered will is told automatically and sends it to the notary handling the estate. oesterreich.gv.at, Abwicklung eines Verlassenschaftsverfahrens (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

SMALL ESTATES

If there are no assets, or assets worth no more than €5,000, and nothing needs entering in the public registers, the estate is not formally administered (Abhandlung) unless someone asks for it. The notary will tell you what applies. Außerstreitgesetz, § 153

9

Settle and divide the estate PAPERWORK

In the months after

The estate is settled in a court procedure (Verlassenschaftsverfahren) run by the notary as the court's commissioner. At the end the court hands the estate to the heirs in a decision (Einantwortungsbeschluss). Austrian law shares an estate without a will equally between sons and daughters, so dividing by the Islamic shares usually needs a valid will or the heirs' agreement.

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)

- [ ] Go to the notary's meeting, or send someone who knows the deceased's affairs
- [ ] 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 ›

THE NOTARY

The notary acts as the court's commissioner. To prove who the heirs are, the final decision is shown with a stamp that it is final (Rechtskraftstempel). Ask the notary which documents you need. Gerichtskommissärsgesetz, § 1 ; oesterreich.gv.at, Abwicklung eines Verlassenschaftsverfahrens (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

WITHOUT A WILL

Children inherit in equal shares. A husband or wife takes a third beside the children. Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB), § 732 ; Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB), § 744

THE RESERVED SHARE

Children and a husband or wife left out by a will can claim a reserved share (Pflichtteil): half of what they would have inherited without a will. Parents have no reserved share. Ask the notary whether and how the heirs can agree a different division. Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB), §§ 757 und 759

10

Look after the family

Four months and ten days

A woman keeps the prescribed mourning (iḥdād: setting aside adornment and perfume) for no more than three days for any death, except for her husband: then four months and ten days, the length of her ʿiddah, or until she gives birth if she is pregnant.

- [ ] Bring food and help with the household
- [ ] Help the widow with errands and appointments
- [ ] Make duʿā for the one who has died

What to say and do when you visit ›

EVIDENCE

A woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day does not mourn 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 ; Qurʾān, al-Ṭalāq 65:4

FOOD

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

ʿIDDAH DATES

Work out when four months and ten days have passed, by the Hijri and the Western calendar. Open ↗

11

Write your own Islamic will

For those left behind

Without a valid will, Austrian law decides who inherits, not the fixed shares, and sons and daughters inherit equally. An Islamic will in Austria is an ordinary Austrian will that directs the estate by the shares, as far as the reserved shares allow.

- [ ] Write it entirely by hand and sign it with your name
- [ ] Add the place and date
- [ ] Ask a notary or lawyer to keep it and register it in the central register of wills

VALID WILL

A will without witnesses must be written entirely in your own hand and signed with your name. The place and date are not required, but are advised. Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB), § 578

- [ ] Ask a notary how the reserved shares affect the Islamic shares

Work out the Islamic shares to take to a notary ›

THE RESERVED SHARES

Children and a husband or wife can each claim half of what the law would have given them. Keep each one's Islamic share at or above that, or ask a notary how to plan for it. Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB), §§ 757 und 759

ANOTHER NATIONALITY

Austrian law applies to the estate of someone who usually lived in Austria. A person can instead choose, in a will, the law of a country whose nationality they hold. A court can set aside a foreign rule that clearly conflicts with Austrian public policy, so ask a notary before relying on this. Verordnung (EU) Nr. 650/2012 (Europäische Erbrechtsverordnung), Art. 21 und 22 ; Verordnung (EU) Nr. 650/2012, Art. 35 (öffentliche Ordnung)

General guidance, not a fatwa or legal advice. Burial law in Austria is made by each of the nine states, so burial times, coffin rules and grave terms differ by state; your funeral company and a notary can confirm them.

Last reviewed October 2026. Something wrong? Tell us