

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 Belgium. If something here is wrong or out of date where you live, please tell us at hello@lifeistemporary.com.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS IN BELGIUM

Declaring the death at the commune	The death is declared to the civil registrar of the commune where it happened, which the funeral company can do for you, and that commune gives the burial permit (free in Brussels and Wallonia; ask about any fee in Flanders). In Brussels, two adults declare the death (one can be the funeral company), bringing the deceased's ID card and marriage record if there is one. be.brussels, Formalités de décès; Decreet begraafplaatsen en lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 15bis; CDLD (Wallonie), art. L1232-17bis
Violent or suspicious deaths and the prosecutor	If there are signs of a violent or suspicious death, the public prosecutor takes charge. In Flanders the burial permit is given only after the prosecutor says they do not object; in Brussels the prosecutor carries out further investigations such as an autopsy. We have not confirmed whether a family can refuse an autopsy. Decreet begraafplaatsen en lijkbezorging, art. 15bis; Ordonnance bruxelloise du 29 novembre 2018, art. 29
Burial permit, timing and repatriation	In Flanders the burial permit cannot be given until 24 hours after the request, except in cases set by the commune's police regulations. In Brussels a wait of 24 hours after the doctor confirms the death must be respected. We have not confirmed the time limits in Wallonia, so ask the commune. Decreet begraafplaatsen en lijkbezorging, art. 15bis; be.brussels, Formalités de décès
Burial permit, timing and repatriation	For burial in Türkiye, a Strasbourg Agreement country, the coffin must be sealed, for example with a soldered zinc inner coffin. For Morocco, which is not on the Walloon government's list of Strasbourg countries, that page says the body goes in a soldered metal coffin inside a wooden one. Contact the airline first and the consulate early. Wallonie, S'informer sur le rapatriement d'une dépouille mortelle
Burial, Muslim plots and graves	Flanders and Brussels allow the body to be placed in a coffin or another burial cover, and Flemish rules refer to burial in a shroud. Wallonia requires a coffin, and from 1 November 2026 also allows a sealed burial envelope that

	meets strict technical rules. In Brussels every cemetery must have a plot for religious rites unless there is no space; in Wallonia a commune may create one. Decreet begraafplaatsen en lijkbezorging, art. 11; Besluit Vlaamse Regering begraafplaatsen, art. 30; Ordonnance bruxelloise, art. 3 and 14; CDLD, art. L1232-2 and L1232-13; Arrêté du Gouvernement wallon du 28 août 2025
Burial, Muslim plots and graves	A grave without a concession is kept at least 10 years in Flanders and at least 5 years in Brussels and Wallonia. In Flanders and Brussels a concession lasts at most 50 years and can be renewed; it ends if no one asks to renew it. Decreet begraafplaatsen en lijkbezorging, art. 7 and 18; Ordonnance bruxelloise, art. 9 and 25; CDLD, art. L1232-21
The notary and the estate	Banks unblock accounts with a certificate or deed of inheritance naming the heirs. In some cases the certificate can come from a notary or from the Federal Public Service Finance; with a marriage contract, a will or an heir under 18, a notary's deed is needed. Notaris.be, De rol van de notaris bij erfenissen en de aangifte van nalatenschap
Small estates	We have not confirmed a small-estate rule on an official page. Ask the bank what it needs to unblock the accounts, and whether a certificate from the Federal Public Service Finance is enough. Notaris.be, De rol van de notaris bij erfenissen en de aangifte van nalatenschap
Benefits and help with costs	Under certain conditions, Belgian social security may help with funeral costs after a work accident, and whoever paid for the funeral of a retired civil servant may get a funeral allowance. A surviving husband or wife may get a survivor's pension or a transition payment, under conditions. If the deceased was without means (indigent), the commune pays the funeral costs (in Wallonia and Brussels, the civil costs only); ask the commune what it covers first. Socialsecurity.be, Een overlijden in de familie; Decreet begraafplaatsen en lijkbezorging, art. 14; CDLD, art. L1232-16; Ordonnance bruxelloise, art. 17

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

WHERE YOU ARE

Burial law in Belgium is made by each region: Flanders, Brussels-Capital and Wallonia. This guide gives the regional rules we could verify on official pages and says which region each applies to. Cemeteries are run by the communes, so ask your commune (gemeente) or funeral company for the rules where the burial will be.

1

Have the death confirmed

In the first hour

A doctor has to confirm the death and write the death certificate, which also says whether the cause was natural. You need it to declare the death and get the burial permit.

- [ ] In a hospital or care home, ask the staff to confirm the death
- [ ] At home, call the family doctor
- [ ] If the death may be violent, such as an accident or a suicide, call 112
- [ ] Tell the staff early that the family needs a quick burial for religious reasons

BRUSSELS

The doctor who confirms the death also records its time and cause. be.brussels (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale), Formalités de décès, enterrement et modes de sépulture (consulté le 10 octobre 2026)

FLANDERS

The body can be moved within Flanders, for example to a funeral home, once the doctor has certified a natural death with no danger to public health. Decreet op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 13 (vervoer)

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

EVIDENCE

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

- [ ] Cover the body with a clean sheet
- [ ] Pray for them, and say only good

2 Call the mosque's funeral service

In the first few hours

Many mosques, Muslim associations and Muslim funeral companies help with the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial or the flight home. Some families belong to a mosque funeral fund: call it first.

- [ ] Call the mosque, the imam or a Muslim funeral company
- [ ] If the deceased paid into a funeral fund, call the fund before anything else
- [ ] Tell them where the body is and who the next of kin is
- [ ] Agree a time for the ghusl and the janazah prayer

NO NUMBER?
Call the nearest large mosque. They will know who to call.

3 Ask whether the prosecutor is involved PAPERWORK

If the death was sudden or violent

If there are signs of a violent or suspicious death, the public prosecutor (procureur des Konings, procureur du Roi) takes charge. In Flanders the burial permit is then given only after the prosecutor says they do not object.

- [ ] Ask the police or the doctor whether the prosecutor is involved
- [ ] Ask the prosecutor's office, early, to release the body quickly for religious reasons

FLANDERS
When there are signs of a violent death, the burial permit can be given only after the prosecutor has said they do not object. Decreet van 16 januari 2004 op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 15bis (versie vanaf 1 november 2025)

- [ ] Ask whether an autopsy is planned
- [ ] Ask the funeral company to keep in touch with the prosecutor's office

BRUSSELS
The prosecutor carries out further investigations, such as an autopsy. Ordonnance du 29 novembre 2018 sur les funérailles et sépultures (Bruxelles-Capitale), art. 21 et 29

OBJECTING TO AN AUTOPSY
We have not confirmed whether a family can refuse an autopsy ordered by the prosecutor, or how a hospital autopsy is agreed. Ask the doctor or the prosecutor's office straight away if the deceased objected.

4 Declare the death at the commune PAPERWORK

As soon as possible

The death is declared to the civil registrar of the commune (gemeente) where it happened. The funeral company can do this for you. The commune then gives the burial permit.

- [ ] Let the funeral company declare the death, or go yourself
- [ ] Take the doctor's certificate and the deceased's ID card
- [ ] Bring any written last wishes the deceased left
- [ ] Fix the date of the burial with the commune

BRUSSELS
Declare the death as soon as possible at the civil registry of the commune where it happened. Two adults must declare it, and one can be the funeral company. That commune gives the burial permit. be.brussels (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale), Formalités de décès, enterrement et modes de sépulture (consulté le 10 octobre 2026)

FLANDERS

The burial permit comes from the civil registrar of the commune where the death was certified. Ask the commune whether there is a fee. Decreet van 16 januari 2004 op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 15bis (versie vanaf 1 november 2025)

WALLONIA

The burial permit is free and comes from the civil registrar of the commune where the death was certified. Code de la démocratie locale et de la décentralisation (Wallonie), art. L1232-17bis (décret du 6 mars 2009)

5 Choose the funeral company and the grave PAPERWORK

Within the first day

You are free to choose the funeral company. It collects the body, arranges the washing place and handles most of the paperwork. Whether you can bury in a shroud without a coffin depends on the region.

- [ ] Ask the funeral company where the ghusl can be done
- [ ] Ask the commune whether its cemetery has a Muslim plot
- [ ] Ask the cemetery whether it accepts burial in a shroud
- [ ] Ask how long the grave lasts and whether you can take a concession

FLANDERS: COFFIN OR SHROUD

The body is placed in a coffin or another cover. Flemish cemetery rules refer to burial in a coffin or a shroud (lijkwade). Covers that stop natural decay are banned. Decreet op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 11 ; Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering tot organisatie, inrichting en beheer van begraafplaatsen en crematoria, art. 30

BRUSSELS: COFFIN OR SHROUD

The body is placed in a coffin or another burial cover. Covers, including shrouds, that stop natural decay are banned. Ordonnance du 29 novembre 2018 sur les funérailles et sépultures (Bruxelles-Capitale), art. 14

WALLONIA: COFFIN

The law says the body is placed in a coffin. From 1 November 2026, burial in the ground in a burial envelope is also allowed, but the envelope must meet strict rules: biodegradable, opaque, and sealed against liquids and gases for at least eight weeks. Ask whether a shroud can meet them. Code de la démocratie locale et de la décentralisation (Wallonie), art. L1232-13 (décret du 6 mars 2009) ; Arrêté du Gouvernement wallon du 28 août 2025 (enveloppes d'ensevelissement), en vigueur le 1er novembre 2026

THE WASHING

We have not confirmed rules on who may wash the body at a funeral home. Ask the funeral company in advance where the mosque team or the family can do the ghusl.

HOW LONG A GRAVE LASTS

A grave without a concession is kept at least 10 years in Flanders and at least 5 years in Brussels. In Flanders and Brussels a concession lasts at most 50 years and can be renewed; if no one asks to renew it, it ends. Decreet op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 7 en 18 ; Ordonnance du 29 novembre 2018 sur les funérailles et sépultures (Bruxelles-Capitale), art. 9 et 25

WALLONIA: GRAVES

A grave without a concession is kept at least 5 years. Ask the commune about concessions. Code de la démocratie locale et de la décentralisation (Wallonie), art. L1232-21

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 plot
- [ ] Ask the commune the earliest time the burial can take place

How to pray the janazah prayer ›

HASTE

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

FLANDERS: TIMING

The burial permit cannot be given until 24 hours after the request for it is received, except in cases set by the commune's police regulations. Ask the commune whether it allows exceptions. Decreet van 16 januari 2004 op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 15bis (versie vanaf 1 november 2025)

BRUSSELS: TIMING

A wait of 24 hours after the doctor confirms the death must be respected. be.brussels (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale), Formalités de décès, enterrement et modes de sépulture (consulté le 10 octobre 2026)

WALLONIA: TIMING

We have not confirmed a minimum or maximum time for burial in Wallonia. Ask the commune or the funeral company.

MUSLIM PLOTS

In Brussels every cemetery must have a plot for religious burial rites, unless there is no space. In Wallonia a commune may create a plot for recognised religions, inside the cemetery. We found no such rule in Flemish law, but some cities have Mecca-facing plots, such as Ghent at Zwijnaarde. Ordonnance du 29 novembre 2018 sur les funérailles et sépultures (Bruxelles-Capitale), art. 3 ; Code de la démocratie locale et de la décentralisation (Wallonie), art. L1232-2, §4 (décret du 6 mars 2009)

EXAMPLES

The multi-faith cemetery in Brussels, inside the Schaerbeek cemetery, has Muslim plots for adults, children and babies. Ghent has offered Mecca-facing graves at Zwijnaarde for over 15 years. Cimetière multiconfessionnel de Bruxelles (CMBrussels), Cimetière et parcelles (consulté le 10 octobre 2026) ; Stad Gent, Extra Mekkagerichte plekken en nieuwe natuurbegraafzones vanaf 2026 (4 december 2025)

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 Morocco or Türkiye. Ask the funeral company which papers it arranges and which the family must get. The estate usually pays, or the family if there is no money in it, unless a fund or insurance covers it. Ask the funeral company what it costs and who signs before you agree.

- [ ] 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
- [ ] Call any mosque funeral fund before arranging anything yourself
- [ ] Check that the airline and the destination country will accept the body

TÜRKIYE

Türkiye is a party to the Strasbourg Agreement on moving the dead. The coffin must be sealed, for example a wooden coffin with a soldered zinc inner coffin. Wallonie (Service public de Wallonie), S'informer sur le rapatriement d'une dépouille mortelle (consulté le 10 octobre 2026)

MOROCCO

Morocco is not on the list of Strasbourg countries on the Walloon government's page. For a country outside that list, the page says the body must go in a soldered metal coffin fitted inside a wooden one. Ask the funeral company to confirm the rules for the destination. Wallonie (Service public de Wallonie), S'informer sur le rapatriement d'une dépouille mortelle (consulté le 10 octobre 2026)

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

Contact the airline first, and make sure the destination country will accept the body. Wallonie (Service public de Wallonie), S'informer sur le rapatriement d'une dépouille mortelle (consulté le 10 octobre 2026)

THE CONSULATE

Each country sets its own requirements. Ask its consulate in Belgium early, before the coffin is closed.

FUNERAL FUNDS
Some mosque organisations run funds for the washing and the flight home. The Belgian Diyanet foundation's fund, for example, gives no help if the funeral was arranged without telling it first. Check the fund's own rules. Belçika Diyanet Vakfı, Cenaze Nakil Fonu (erişim 10 Ekim 2026)

7

Get copies of the death record PAPERWORK

In the first week

Banks, insurers and pension funds may want a copy of the death record. The pension service is told automatically once the death is declared at the commune.

- [ ] Ask the commune where the death happened for copies
- [ ] Ask each organisation whether it needs one

PENSIONS
Once the death is declared at the commune where it happened, the pension service is told automatically. Socialsecurity.be (Belgische sociale zekerheid), Een overlijden in de familie (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

COST
We have not confirmed the fee for copies. Ask the commune.

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

- [ ] Ask a notary before accepting an estate that may have debts

IF THE DECEASED HAD NO MEANS

If the deceased was without means (indigent), the commune pays for the funeral. In Flanders it pays the costs of the funeral; in Wallonia only the civil costs, not religious ceremonies. It is the commune where the deceased was registered, or else where they died. Ask the commune what it covers before you commit to any cost, and tell it clearly that the deceased was Muslim and must be buried. Decreet op de begraafplaatsen en de lijkbezorging (Vlaanderen), art. 14 ; Code de la démocratie locale et de la décentralisation (Wallonie), art. L1232-16

BRUSSELS

If the deceased was without means, the commune where they were registered pays the civil costs of the funeral. Ask it what this covers. Ordonnance du 29 novembre 2018 sur les funérailles et sépultures (Bruxelles-Capitale), art. 17

and

Find the will, and claim any benefits PAPERWORK

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

A notary, a public legal officer, usually settles the estate. Belgian social security helps with funeral costs only in some cases.

- [ ] Check papers at home, email, and with any notary
- [ ] If the death followed a work accident, ask about the allowance for funeral costs
- [ ] If the deceased was a retired civil servant, ask the Federal Pension Service about the funeral allowance
- [ ] Secure the house and car, and keep the phone line active for sign-in codes

BENEFITS

After a work accident, the family may get an allowance for funeral costs. Whoever paid for the funeral of a retired civil servant may get a funeral allowance. A surviving husband or wife may get a survivor's pension or a transition payment. Socialsecurity.be (Belgische sociale zekerheid), Een overlijden in de familie (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

9

Settle and divide the estate PAPERWORK

In the months after

Banks unblock the accounts with a certificate (attest van erfopvolging, certificat d'hérédité) or a deed (akte van erfopvolging, acte d'hérédité) of inheritance that names the heirs. Belgian inheritance law may not follow the Islamic shares, so ask a notary early how the heirs can divide by them.

- [ ] Ask the bank what it needs to unblock the accounts
- [ ] See a notary if there is a will, a marriage contract, a child under 18 or any home or land
- [ ] Pay any bequest, up to one third, to people who are not heirs

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)

- [ ] Divide the rest by the fixed shares

See how the estate divides ›

CERTIFICATE OR DEED

In some cases the certificate can come from a notary or from the Federal Public Service Finance. If the deceased had a marriage contract or a will, or an heir is under 18, the accounts are unblocked with a notary's deed. Notaris.be (Koninklijke Federatie van het Belgisch Notariaat), De rol van de notaris bij erfenissen en de aangifte van nalatenschap (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

SHARES AND TAX

We have not confirmed on an official page the reserved shares for children and the spouse, or the inheritance tax rules, which are regional. Ask a notary.

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, Belgian law decides who inherits, not the fixed shares. An Islamic will in Belgium is an ordinary Belgian will that directs the estate by the shares as far as the law allows. A notary can tell you how.

- [ ] Ask a notary how to make a valid will in Belgium
- [ ] Take the Islamic shares to the notary
- [ ] Ask the notary how Belgian law protects children and a husband or wife, and how that affects the Islamic shares

Work out the Islamic shares to take to a notary ›

VALID WILL
We have not yet confirmed the Belgian rules for a valid will on an official page. Make it with a notary, or have a notary check it.

General guidance, not a fatwa or legal advice. Burial law in Belgium is made by each of its three regions, Flanders, Brussels-Capital and Wallonia, so time limits, coffin rules and Muslim plots differ by region; your funeral company and a notary can confirm them.

Last reviewed October 2026. Something wrong? Tell us