

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 If something here is wrong or out of date where you live, please tell us at hello@lifeistemporary.com.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Registering the death at the gemeente	The death is registered at the gemeente where it happened, by a relative or by the funeral company on the family's behalf. You need the doctor's death certificate. The gemeente then gives the death record (akte van overlijden) and the free burial permit (verlof tot begraven); there can be no burial without them. Ondernemersplein, Aangifte en akte van overlijden; Burgerlijk Wetboek Boek 1, art. 19f and 19h; Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 11 and 12
The municipal coroner, the prosecutor and autopsy	If the doctor cannot confirm a natural death, a municipal coroner (gemeentelijke lijkschouwer) examines the body and, if needed, reports to the public prosecutor. The body may then not be moved without the prosecutor's permission, and burial waits for a statement of no objection. Outside a criminal investigation, an autopsy needs the consent of the deceased or the family. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 3, 7, 12, 72, 73 and 76
Burial permit, timing and repatriation	Burial takes place no earlier than 36 hours after the death and no later than the 6th working day; weekends and public holidays do not count. To bury sooner for religious reasons, the funeral company asks the gemeente where the person died; permission needs the mayor and the public prosecutor. To bury later, ask the mayor. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 16 and 17; Rijksoverheid, Welke regels gelden er bij begraven en cremeren?; Ondernemersplein, Aangifte en akte van overlijden
Burial permit, timing and repatriation	To bury abroad, you need a laissez-passer for the body (lijkenpas) from the gemeente where the person died. Türkiye is a party to the Strasbourg Agreement, whose coffin rules then apply; Morocco is not on the list of Strasbourg countries given by the Walloon government, and for a country outside the Agreement Dutch rules require a watertight coffin and the consulate sets its own conditions, so call it early. Ondernemersplein, Stoffelijk overschot vervoeren; Besluit op de lijkbezorging, art. 11 and 12; Wallonie, S'informer sur le rapatriement d'une dépouille mortelle (list of Strasbourg Agreement states)

Burial and graves	Dutch law allows burial without a coffin if the body is in another biodegradable cover suited to burial, such as a shroud; ask the cemetery first. A private grave right is given for an indefinite term or at least 10 years, and a fixed term is renewed if you ask within the 2 years before it ends. Some municipal cemeteries, such as Utrecht's, have Islamic sections; ask your gemeente. Besluit op de lijkbezorging, art. 3 and 4; Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 28; Gemeente Utrecht, Islamitisch begraven
The notaris and the estate	Without a will, a husband, wife or registered partner inherits the estate by default. A child left out of a will can claim a reserved share in money (half of their share without a will); the claim must be made within 5 years of the death, even if payment waits until the surviving spouse dies. A notaris makes the certificate of inheritance (verklaring van erfrecht) that banks may ask for. A will is valid only if made with a notaris. Rijksoverheid, Wat kan ik vastleggen in mijn testament?; Kan ik mijn echtgenoot en kinderen onterven?; Wat is een verklaring van erfrecht?; Notaris.nl, Onterfd
Small estates	There is no national small-estate rule that we could confirm. Each bank decides when it needs a certificate of inheritance, so ask the bank first. Before paying the deceased's bills, ask a notaris about accepting the estate beneficially, so that you do not take on its debts. Rijksoverheid, Verklaring van erfrecht; Erfenis aanvaarden of weigeren
Death payments and help with costs	If the deceased received AOW, Anw or a disability benefit, the partner (or else children under 18, or else someone in the same home) may qualify for a one-off payment of one month's gross benefit; check with the SVB or UWV. If no one arranges the funeral, the mayor does and the gemeente pays. It can reclaim the cost from the estate and, only if that is not enough, from relatives legally bound to support the deceased. Rijksoverheid, overlijdensuitkering; Nederland Wereldwijd, AOW overlijden doorgeven; Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 21 and 22

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

WHERE YOU ARE

The Netherlands has one national law for registering a death, burial and estates, and this guide describes it. Each municipality (gemeente) runs its own cemeteries and sets its own grave types and fees, so ask your gemeente or funeral company what its cemeteries offer.

1

Have the death confirmed

In the first hour

A doctor has to examine the body and confirm the death as soon as possible. If they are sure the death was natural, they write the death certificate (verklaring van overlijden). You need it to register 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 (huisarts)
- [ ] If the death may not be natural, such as an accident or a suicide, call 112
- [ ] Tell the staff early that the family needs a quick burial for religious reasons

WHO SIGNS

The doctor who treated the deceased, or a municipal coroner (gemeentelijke lijkschouwer), who is a registered forensic doctor. A certificate is given only if they are sure the death had a natural cause. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 3, 5 and 7 (lijkschouwing; geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

IF THE DOCTOR IS NOT SURE

The doctor must not sign. They tell the municipal coroner straight away, who examines the body. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 3, 5 and 7 (lijkschouwing; geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

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

EVIDENCE

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

- [ ] Straighten the arms and legs
- [ ] 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 and Muslim funeral companies (uitvaartondernemers) 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 the municipal coroner cannot confirm a natural death, they report it to the public prosecutor (officier van justitie). Then the body may not be moved without the prosecutor's permission, and the burial waits until the prosecutor gives a statement of no objection.

- [ ] Ask the police or the coroner whether the prosecutor is involved

MOVING THE BODY
When a death may not be natural, the body may only be moved with the prosecutor's permission. The prosecutor can also order the burial to be delayed. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 76 (niet-natuurlijke dood)

- [ ] Ask the prosecutor's office, early, to release the body quickly for religious reasons
- [ ] Ask whether an autopsy (sectie) is planned
- [ ] Ask the funeral company to collect the statement of no objection (verklaring van geen bezwaar) for the gemeente

THE BURIAL PERMIT
The gemeente gives no burial permit without a death certificate from the doctor or coroner, or a statement of no objection from the prosecutor. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 11 and 12 (verlof tot begraving)

AN AUTOPSY
Outside a criminal investigation, an autopsy needs the consent of the deceased, or else of the husband or wife or the nearest relatives. Say no if the deceased did not want one. An autopsy ordered by a court in a criminal investigation does not need consent, but the family is told. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 72 and 73 (sectie)

4 Register the death at the gemeente PAPERWORK

Before the burial

The death is registered (aangifte van overlijden) at the municipality (gemeente) where it happened. A relative can do it, or the funeral company can do it for you. You then get the death record (akte van overlijden) and the free burial permit (verlof tot begraven). There can be no burial without both.

- [ ] Take the doctor's death certificate and your own ID
- [ ] Or let the funeral company register it: many do this online
- [ ] Check how your gemeente works: some ask relatives to come in person

WHO CAN REGISTER
Anyone who knows of the death first-hand. If no one does it within the time allowed for the burial, the mayor arranges it. Burgerlijk Wetboek Boek 1, art. 19f and 19h (akte en aangifte van overlijden)

WHAT YOU GET

The gemeente gives the death record and the burial permit, and says these papers are needed before the burial. Extracts for banks and other offices are a separate request (see below). Ondernemersplein (KVK/RVO), Aangifte en akte van overlijden (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 11 and 12 (verlof tot begraving)

AN EXAMPLE

In Amsterdam registration is free and a relative gets the burial permit straight away. Each gemeente sets its own way of working. Single Digital Gateway (government.nl), Municipality of Amsterdam: taking a deceased person out of the Netherlands (last updated 7 January 2026)

5

Choose the funeral company and the grave PAPERWORK

Within the first day

You are free to choose the funeral company (uitvaartondernemer). It collects the body, arranges the washing place and handles most of the paperwork. Dutch law allows burial without a coffin, in another cover such as a shroud.

- [ ] Ask the funeral company where the ghusl can be done
- [ ] Ask the cemetery whether it accepts burial in a shroud only
- [ ] Ask the gemeente which Islamic sections and grave types its cemeteries have

COFFIN OR SHROUD

A body is buried in a coffin, or without one if it is in another cover suited to burial. The coffin or cover must be biodegradable. Each cemetery has its own rules, so check with it first. Besluit op de lijkbezorging, art. 3 and 4 (begraven in een kist of ander omhulsel; geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

- [ ] Ask for a private grave (particulier graf) for an indefinite term if you want the grave to stay

THE WASHING

We have not confirmed national 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 private grave right is given in writing, for an indefinite term or for at least 10 years. A fixed term is renewed on request within 2 years before it ends. If the cemetery finds a private grave clearly neglected, it writes to the holder; if the grave is still not kept up within the set period (one year, or five if the letter is not acknowledged), the right ends. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 28 (recht op een graf)

AN INDEFINITE GRAVE

In Utrecht, for example, an indefinite term does not mean for ever: when the holder dies, the heirs must transfer the right to a new living holder, or it goes back to the gemeente. A general grave (algemeen graf) there is cleared after 10 years. Gemeente Utrecht, Islamitisch begraven (geraadpleegd 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 an Islamic section or Muslim cemetery
- [ ] Plan the burial for at least 36 hours after the death, or ask early for permission to bury sooner

How to pray the janazah prayer ›

HASTE

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

THE LAW

Burial takes place no earlier than 36 hours after the death and no later than the 6th working day after it. Weekends and public holidays are not working days. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 16 and 17 (termijnen) ; Rijksoverheid, Welke regels gelden er bij begraven en cremeren? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

SOONER, FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS

To bury within 36 hours you need permission from the gemeente where the person died. It is given only with the agreement of the mayor and the public prosecutor. The funeral company can ask for you. Ondernemersplein (KVK/RVO), Aangifte en akte van overlijden (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Rijksoverheid, Welke regels gelden er bij begraven en cremeren? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

LATER

To bury after 6 working days, for example while family travel from abroad, ask the mayor's permission. Rijksoverheid, Welke regels gelden er bij begraven en cremeren? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

ISLAMIC SECTIONS

Some municipal cemeteries have Islamic sections. In Utrecht, for example, the graves face east and no permission from a mosque or imam is needed. A religious community can also run its own cemetery. Ask your gemeente what it offers. Gemeente Utrecht, Islamitisch begraven (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 37 (bijzondere begraafplaats)

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 or insurer before arranging anything yourself
- [ ] Check that the airline and the destination country will accept the body

THE BODY PASS

To take a body out of the Netherlands you need a laissez-passer for the body (lijkenpas), from the gemeente where the person died. Within Belgium and Luxembourg the burial permit is enough. Ondernemersplein (KVK/RVO), Stoffelijk overschot vervoeren (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Besluit op de lijkbezorging, art. 11 and 12 (vervoer naar het buitenland)

THE COFFIN

Türkiye is a party to the Strasbourg Agreement on moving the dead, so the coffin must meet its rules, such as a soldered zinc inner coffin. Morocco is not on the list of Strasbourg countries given by the Walloon government. For a country outside the Agreement, Dutch rules require a watertight coffin, and the consulate sets the rest. Ask the funeral company to confirm the coffin rules for the destination. Besluit op de lijkbezorging, art. 11 and 12 (vervoer naar het buitenland) ; 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 the Netherlands early, before the coffin is closed.

FUNERAL FUNDS
Some mosque organisations run funds for the washing and the flight home. The Diyanet foundation's fund (ISN), for example, was set up in 1985 so that Turkish citizens who die in the Netherlands can be buried in Türkiye. Check the fund's own rules. Hollanda Diyanet Vakfı (ISN), Cenaze Yardımlaşma Fonu (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

7

Get copies of the death record PAPERWORK

In the first week

Banks, insurers and pension funds may want an extract from the death record (uittreksel uit de akte van overlijden).

- [ ] Ask the gemeente where the death happened for extracts
- [ ] Ask each organisation whether it needs one

COST
In Amsterdam a copy of the death record costs €17.80. Ask your gemeente for its fee. Single Digital Gateway (government.nl), Municipality of Amsterdam: taking a deceased person out of the Netherlands (last updated 7 January 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

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

- [ ] List loans, bills and money owed to family
- [ ] Ask a scholar about any unpaid zakat
- [ ] Before paying other bills, ask a notaris whether to accept the estate (beneficiair aanvaarden)

CAREFUL WITH DEBTS
Under Dutch law, an heir who pays the deceased's bills or takes their things has accepted the estate outright, and then answers for all its debts, even from their own money. Paying the funeral from the estate is the one exception. Accepting it "beneficially" protects you from the debts. Rijksoverheid, Hoe kan ik een erfenis aanvaarden of weigeren? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

IF NO ONE ARRANGES THE FUNERAL
The mayor arranges it and the gemeente pays. It can claim the cost back from the estate and, only if the estate is not enough, from relatives who were legally bound to support the deceased. Tell the gemeente clearly that the deceased was Muslim and must be buried. Wet op de lijkbezorging, art. 21 and 22 (lijkbezorging door de burgemeester)

and

Find the will, and claim the death payment PAPERWORK

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

A notaris, a public legal officer, holds every Dutch will and usually settles the estate. If the deceased lived in the Netherlands, the state pension office (SVB) is told of the death automatically; check with any other benefit office.

- [ ] Ask the Central Register of Wills (Centraal Testamentenregister) whether there is a will, and which notaris holds it

REGISTER OF WILLS
The register says whether there is a will and which notaris holds it. You can ask online, or in writing for free with an extract from the death record. Rijksoverheid, Waar kan ik opvragen of een overleden familielid een testament had? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

- [ ] If the deceased had AOW, Anw or a disability benefit, check the one-off death payment (overlijdensuitkering)
- [ ] Secure the house and car, and keep the phone line active for sign-in codes

DEATH PAYMENT
If the deceased received AOW, Anw or a disability benefit, the partner, or else the children under 18, or else someone living in the same home, may qualify for a one-off payment of one month's gross benefit. Check with the SVB or UWV. Rijksoverheid, Wat gebeurt er met mijn uitkering als ik overlijd? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Nederland Wereldwijd (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken), AOW: overlijden doorgeven (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

LIVING IN MOROCCO OR TÜRKIYE
If you live in Morocco, Türkiye, Suriname or Spain, contact the SVB office at the Dutch embassy and claim the AOW death payment within 1 year. Nederland Wereldwijd (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken), AOW: overlijden doorgeven (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

9 Settle and divide the estate PAPERWORK

In the months after

Without a will, a husband or wife inherits the estate by default under Dutch law. Dividing by the Islamic shares therefore needs a will or the heirs to agree. Ask a notaris early how this can be done.

- [ ] Ask the bank whether it needs a certificate of inheritance (verklaring van erfrecht)

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)

- [ ] See a notaris for the certificate and for any home or land
- [ ] 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 ›

CERTIFICATE OF INHERITANCE

It says who the heirs are, so they can reach the bank accounts. Only a notaris makes it, after checking the civil records and the register of wills. The bank says when it is needed. With many heirs it can take weeks or months. Rijksoverheid, Wat is een verklaring van erfrecht en wanneer heb ik deze nodig? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

HUSBAND OR WIFE

A husband, wife or registered partner inherits the estate by default. An unmarried partner inherits nothing without a will. Ask a notaris about a marriage that was religious only. Rijksoverheid, Wat kan ik vastleggen in mijn testament? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

A DISINHERITED CHILD

If a will leaves a child out, the child can still claim a reserved share (legitieme portie): half of what they would inherit without a will, in money. It is not automatic. The claim must be made within 5 years of the death, even if payment waits until the surviving spouse dies. Waiting can lose the claim, so see a notaris early. Notaris.nl (Koninklijke Notariële Beroepsorganisatie), Onterfd (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Rijksoverheid, Kan ik mijn echtgenoot en kinderen onterven? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

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, Dutch law decides who inherits, not the fixed shares: a husband or wife takes the whole estate first. An Islamic will in the Netherlands is an ordinary Dutch will, made with a notaris, that directs the estate by the shares as far as the law allows.

- [ ] Make the will with a notaris: a will you write yourself is not valid in the Netherlands
- [ ] Take the Islamic shares to the notaris
- [ ] Ask the notaris how the children's reserved share affects the Islamic shares

VALID WILL
You can make a will from age 16. It can only be made with a notaris. A will you make yourself is not legally valid in the Netherlands.
Rijksoverheid, Wat kan ik vastleggen in mijn testament? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

Work out the Islamic shares to take to a notaris ›

THE RESERVED SHARE

A child left out of a will can claim half of what they would inherit without a will, in money, within 5 years of the death. A disinherited child who accepts being left out receives nothing. Notaris.nl (Koninklijke Notariële Beroepsorganisatie), Onterfd (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026) ; Rijksoverheid, Kan ik mijn echtgenoot en kinderen onterven? (geraadpleegd 10 oktober 2026)

General guidance, not a fatwa or legal advice. Dutch law on registering a death, burial and estates is national, but each municipality runs its own cemeteries and sets its own grave types and fees; your funeral company and a notaris can confirm them.

Last reviewed October 2026. Something wrong? Tell us