



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.

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.



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 home to use.

1

Have the death pronounced

In the first hour

A death has to be confirmed before anything else can happen.

☐ In a hospital or hospice, ask the staff to pronounce the death

☐ At home and unexpected, call 911

- ☐ Tell the staff early that the family needs a quick release for a religious burial

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 masjid's funeral committee

In the first few hours

They arrange the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial, and usually know which funeral home to use.

- ☐ Call the funeral committee 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

NO NUMBER?

Use the directory below, or call the nearest large masjid. They will know who to call.

3

Ask whether a coroner is involved PAPERWORK

If the death was sudden

After an unexpected death a coroner or medical examiner may need to examine the body, which can delay burial.

- ☐ Ask the hospital or police whether the case has gone to the coroner
- ☐ Ask whether an autopsy is required
- ☐ Ask how to register a religious objection under your state law

STATE RULES

Whether an autopsy can be declined on religious grounds differs from state to state. Ask the medical examiner's office directly.

4

Choose a funeral home that allows ghusl PAPERWORK

Within the first day

Many funeral homes work with Muslim committees. Your committee will usually name one.

- ☐ Confirm the committee can wash the body there
- ☐ Ask for no embalming and no viewing
- ☐ Ask the funeral home to file the death certificate and the burial permit

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 committee usually provides the cloth.

- ☐ Confirm who will wash
- ☐ Confirm the kafan is ready

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)

5

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 plot price and the fee to open and close the grave

How to pray the janazah prayer >

HASTE

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

6

Get copies of the death certificate PAPERWORK

In the first week

Banks, insurers, the DMV and government offices will each want a certified copy.

- ☐ Order several certified copies through the funeral home
- ☐ Or order them from the your state vital records office

WHERE TO ORDER

The CDC lists every state's vital records office. [Open ↗](#)

7

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

and

Find the will, and tell Social Security PAPERWORK

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

The executor named in the will leads what follows.

- ☐ Check papers at home, email, and with any attorney
- ☐ Confirm the funeral home reported the death to Social Security
- ☐ Ask about survivor benefits
- ☐ Secure the house and car, and keep the phone line active for sign-in codes

SOCIAL SECURITY

Funeral homes usually report the death. Survivors can also call 1-800-772-1213. Open ↗

8

Settle and divide the estate PAPERWORK

In the months after

Small estates may qualify for a simpler process in your state. One call to a local estate attorney will tell you.

- ☐ Open probate if the estate needs it
- ☐ Close accounts and cancel subscriptions

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)

☐ 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 >

9

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 >

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)

General guidance, not a fatwa or legal advice. Rules on autopsies, embalming, burial permits and probate differ by state; your funeral home and a local estate attorney can confirm them.