

Registering a Death in England and Wales



A death occurring in England or Wales must be registered with five days of the Medical Examiner signing the Medical Certificate Cause of Death (MCCD) which includes weekends and bank holidays.

The death was at home or in a hospital, care or nursing home or a hospice and the death was expected.

The attending doctor will issue the Death Certificate. This certificate will then be emailed to the relevant Medical Examiner office for the area. The Medical Examiner office will then scrutinise the death, and may speak to the doctor and family who were present.

Once the Medical Examiner is satisfied, they will sign the MCCD and email it to the registry office, you will need to make an appointment and attend at the Registrar Office usually in the District where the death occurred although you can use any Registrar Office.

The person registering should preferably be the closest relative however, if they are not available then it can be:

- a person who was present at the time of death
- an administrator from the hospital, care or nursing home or hospice.
- are in charge of making arrangements for the funeral.

The Registrar will need information about the person who has died and you should take with you the following documents, if available. If you can't obtain some or all of the documents don't worry as long as you can give the information that should normally be acceptable.

- Death Certificate
- Birth Certificate
- Council Tax bill
- Driving Licence
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Certificate
- NHS medical card
- Passport
- Proof of address (such as a utility bill)

The Registrar will want to know:

- the person's full name at the time of death
- any names previously used, e.g. maiden name
- the person's date and place of birth
- their last address

- their occupation
- the full name, date of birth and occupation of a surviving or late spouse or civil partner
- whether they were getting a State Pension or any other benefits

The Registrar will give you the option for the Certificate for burial or cremation (the 'green form') to be emailed or handed delivered to your Funeral Director (or the place of cremation or internment if not using a Funeral Director).

You can also obtain additional copies of the Registration for banks, insurance companies and to sort out the deceased affairs which are charged for. These can be obtained at the time of Registering or later by ordering online.

The death was unexpected or the result of an accident or unnatural circumstances or if the cause of death is unknown.

The death will be reported to the Coroner for the District in which the death took place or the deceased was found. (A coroner is an independent judicial office holder with responsibility for investigating and explaining certain types of death).

The Coroner will investigate the circumstances of the death and if satisfied will order a Death Certificate to be issued and the above procedure should be followed.

If after initial investigation the Coroner is not satisfied they may order a postmortem to be performed in order to ascertain the cause of death. If following this the cause of death is known and the Coroner is satisfied that no further investigation is necessary they will again order the Death Certificate to be issued and the above procedure should be followed.

If the Coroner decides that an Inquest should be held to ascertain the cause of death or the circumstances surrounding the death they will normally open and then adjourn the Inquest and set a later date for a full Inquest to be held. In these circumstances the Coroner will issue an Interim Certificate which will be sent directly to the Registrar. They will also issue the necessary permissions for the funeral to take place and will enable you to obtain documents to deal with the deceased affairs. You do not need to Register the death as the Coroner will do this following the full and final Inquest.

The death has occurred outside of England and Wales.

In these circumstances the death will have been registered in the Country where the death took place according to their laws and regulations.

Once the deceased arrives in England or Wales the death must be reported to the Coroner in the District the deceased is being cared for, who may in certain circumstances carry out their own investigation. The documents should also be delivered to the Registrar who will issue a 'no liability to Register' document which allows the funeral to take place. The Coroner may also issue an order for burial or cremation. If the documents from another Country are not in English you may need to have these translated. If you are using a funeral director they will normally deal with all of this as part of their service to you.

In the event of a death occurring in other areas of the UK or abroad you are strongly advised to seek the help of a funeral director as procedures can be complex and permission may need to be requested and issued before the deceased can be repatriated. The funeral director may engage a specialist repatriation company or refer you to them.