

Registering a Death in Scotland



A death occurring in Scotland must be registered within eight days 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 and send directly to the Registrar office of your choice. If requested, a copy of the Death Certificate can also be emailed to the person who will be registering the death. You should then contact the Registration Office and you can decide to attend at the office or Register by telephone or during an on-line call.

Around 12% of MCCD's will be randomly selected for review by the [Death Certification Review Team](#) prior to the death being registered to ensure the accuracy of the certificate details. However if the funeral has to take place within a certain timescale you can apply for advance registration.

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.
- In the absence of the above it can be someone who can give the required information.

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

- Deceased's Birth Extract (if available)
- Deceased's marriage/civil partnership extracts (if applicable)
- Deceased's National Health Service medical card (if available)

The Registrar will want to know:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Usual residence
- Occupation
- Details of marriage(s) and or civil partnership(s)
- Full name and occupation of Father/Parent

- Full name, maiden name (if appropriate) and occupation of Mother/Parent
- Full name and address of Doctor

You will also be asked for additional information which does not appear on the register entry but is gathered for statistical purposes.

During your appointment, the registrar will ask you to confirm the accuracy of the information given and you will be asked to provide a signature for the register entry, to confirm its accuracy.

If you are Registering remotely you will be asked to send a scan or photograph any documents relating to life events for the deceased person that took place outside Scotland to the registrar. The registrar will confirm the email address for receipt of these documents. The documents should be in English or accompanied by an English translation.

During a remote registration appointment the registrar will create a template of the entry and either read this back to you, or send a draft to you via email to confirm the accuracy of the information given.

On confirming the accuracy of the entry the registrar will ask you how you usually sign your signature. This will be added to the entry followed by the word “(Transcribed)”.

Once Registration is completed You will receive one copy of the abbreviated death certificate free of charge.

The registrar will offer to send a scanned copy of the Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14) to your funeral director to allow funeral arrangements to be made. If you have not decided on a funeral director the registrar will offer to email or post a copy of the Certificate of Registration of Death to you.

You will be given the opportunity to purchase any full death certificates you may require for business purposes, such as for life insurance or private pension company.

These documents can be given to you immediately if you are in the registration office, or posted to you if your registration is being completed remotely.

Tell us once service

The Tell Us Once Service is a government service which allows you to report a death to several government departments, agencies and the local authority in one contact. For example, Tell Us Once will help you to report the death to most of the offices that were paying benefits to the person who died, as well as to other government agencies such as the Passport Service and the DVLA.

You must register the death first.

The registrar will offer you the opportunity to complete the Tell us Once Service.

They will either:- complete the Tell Us Once service with you when you register the death or give you a unique reference number to allow you to use the service on line or by phone The registrar will notify the local authority Council Tax department of any death of a person 18 years of age or older, and the Electoral Registration Officer will be notified of a death where the deceased is 14 years of age or older.

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

The death will normally be reported to the Procurator Fiscal for the Area the death took place. The Procurator Fiscal works on behalf of the Lord Advocate for Scotland who is responsible for bringing public prosecution and is also responsible for investigating all sudden and suspicious deaths. The office is known as COPFS and there are three in Scotland, North, East and West. A specialised unit within this office known as the Scottish Fatalities Investigation Unit (SFIU) are responsible for most of the COPFSs investigation work.

The SFIU will oversee all deaths investigation except when there is evidence of a crime taken place. The sudden and unexpected death of a loved one can be a traumatic event for nearest relatives and the COPFS will provide the nearest relatives with information during the investigation.

If following the investigation it is decided no further action is required the Doctor may be able to issue a Death Certificate with the cause of death and the above procedure should be followed to Register the Death.

Some deaths may require a postmortem to determine the cause of death and this would be performed by a pathologist appointed by the COPFS. Once completed a Death Certificate will be issued and the above procedure should be followed to Register the death. If further examination is required to determine the cause of death the pathologist may issue a medical certificate with an interim cause of death.

If the COPFS are involved and a cremation is requested the Procurator Fiscal will issue their Form E1 which is required and will be obtained by the funeral director. If you are not using a funeral director you should request this form and deliver it to the Crematorium.

The death has occurred outside of Scotland.

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

If the person has died in other areas of the U K then the documents issued by that Country will be accepted by the burial and cremation authorities in Scotland without the need for further documents.

If the person died outside the U K then the documents issued by the Country where death took place need to be delivered by your funeral director to the [Death Certification Review Team](#) who will issue the authorisations for the funeral to proceed. If the documents are not in English you may require to have these translated.

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. They may engage a specialist repatriation company or refer you to them.