

125 tasks you need to consider on the most difficult day of your life



The following is a list of 125 items that often need to be considered following the death of a loved one. Many of the items on this list can be collected or planned in advance, helping to remove a significant burden from loved ones during a most challenging time.

Secure vital statistics

1. Full legal name
2. Complete address
3. Telephone number
4. Email address
5. Date of birth
6. Place of birth
7. Marital status
8. Name of spouse
9. Spouse's maiden name
10. Education and/or degrees obtained
11. Citizenship
12. Father's name
13. Father's birthplace
14. Mother's name (including maiden name)
15. Mother's birthplace
16. Names of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren
17. Social Security number
18. Veteran's serial/service number
19. Date and place of military service
20. Date of discharge from military service
21. Length of stay at current residence/ former residences
22. Employment history
23. Location of most recent employer, including contact information
24. Family origin

Decide, plan and arrange within a few hours

25. Cemetery arrangements
26. Interment space and exact location of burial/disposition
27. Opening and closing of the grave/mausoleum/ niche space
28. Endowment care

29. Graveside committal service
30. Use of cemetery chapel for committal prayers
31. Embalming and other preparation for loved one
32. Restorative art
33. Funeral home selection
34. Location of funeral service
35. Service type (religious, fraternal, military, etc.)
36. Time and place for visitation and funeral service
37. Alternative services (non-religious, celebrant, celebration of life event)
38. Eulogy content (and who will deliver it)
39. Casket selection (open or closed)
40. Outer burial container and/or burial vault
41. Urn/niche space
42. Obituary content and placement
43. Clothing for loved one
44. Jewelry and glasses for loved one
45. Cosmetology and hairdressing for loved one
46. Scripture, readings and/or poem choices
47. Clergy, celebrant or other officiant
48. Grave marking (temporary or permanent)
49. Memorial marker/monument setting and inscription
50. Charitable organization preferences for memorials in memory of loved one
51. Register book, memorial/prayer cards
52. Pallbearer choices
53. Floral arrangements and their delivery
54. Music selections
55. Music performer(s) such as organist, pianist and/or vocalist
56. Funeral coach arrangements
57. Limousine for family and pallbearers
58. Funeral car list for family and select guests
59. Transportation for other family members and guests
60. Funeral clothing for family members

Continued →

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Continued

Decide, plan and arrange within a few hours

61. Care of children and pets during services
62. House cleaning
63. Extra chairs; special seating requirements (i.e. accessible for people with disabilities)
64. Reviewing and signing paperwork (i.e. burial permit)
65. Main point(s) of contact for answering phone calls, emails, letters, etc.
66. Meetings with funeral director, lawyer, clergy and cemetery representative
67. Transportation and lodging for out-of-town guests
68. Acknowledgements for those who help in a special way (contributors of flowers, food, other donations)
69. Number of certified copies of death certificate to order
70. Food for family and out-of-town relatives and guests
71. Items for memento display and/or memorial board
72. Memorial video production needs, including photos, music, etc.
73. Thank you notes

Notify as soon as possible

74. All immediate family members
75. All other relatives
76. All friends
77. Minister and church
78. Funeral director
79. Pallbearers
80. Cemetery caretaker
81. Doctor(s)
82. Employer of deceased
83. Employers of family members who will miss work
84. Music performer(s) such as organist, pianist and/or vocalist
85. Newspapers (for notices and/or obituary arrangements)
86. Social Security Administration
87. Veterans Administration
88. Insurance agents
89. Religious, fraternal and civic organizations and unions
90. Attorney, accountant, financial planner and executor of estate
91. Banks and credit card companies
92. Cell phone and online account providers (email, social media, etc.)

Pay for some or all of the following

93. Estate/inheritance taxes
94. Funeral service expenses
95. Family burial estate, mausoleum or cremation niche
96. Permanent memorialization
97. Monument/marker engraving
98. Funeral director fees
99. Clergy fees
100. Music performance expenses
101. Floral arrangements
102. Obituary costs
103. Any special event requests (dove or balloon release; motorcycle hearse, etc.)
104. Funeral catering/other food expenses
105. Transportation
106. Medical personnel fees
107. Ambulance transportation
108. Hospital, nursing home and/or hospice costs
109. Medications
110. Immediate bills (mortgage/rent, taxes, loans, credit cards, utilities, etc.)

Collect documents and paperwork

111. Will
112. Birth certificate/legal proof of age
113. Certificates, permits and other legal papers
114. Citizenship papers
115. Social Security card
116. Marriage license
117. Veteran's discharge certificate
118. Insurance policies (life, health, accident, property, auto) and government forms
119. Disability claims
120. Bank books and listing of accounts
121. Other financial documents
122. Property deeds
123. Cemetery deed or proof of ownership
124. Auto titles or bill of sale
125. Income tax returns, receipts and cancelled checks

