STANFIELD MORTUARY SERVICE

What to Do When a Loved One Dies

2491 South Main Street • Rocky Mount, VA 24151
Telephone: (540) 483-2902
Website: www.stanfieldmortuary.com

A practical step-by-step checklist prepared to guide and support families through personal, memorial, and administrative decisions.

Phase 1: Immediate Steps (First 24 to 48 Hours)

During the first day or two, prioritize personal wellbeing, legal pronouncement, and immediate dependent care before turning to long-term administrative tasks.

- [ ] **Obtain Official Legal Pronouncement of Death:** If death occurs in a hospital, hospice facility, or nursing home, medical staff coordinates the declaration. For an at-home hospice death, contact your hospice nurse immediately. If death is sudden or unattended at home, call 911 for first responder transport and physician pronouncement.
- [ ] **Contact Stanfield Mortuary Service (540-483-2902):** Notify us as soon as you are ready. Our funeral directors are on call 24 hours a day to bring your loved one into our respectful care, answer immediate questions, and schedule a convenient arrangement conference.
- [ ] **Notify Immediate Family, Close Friends, and Key Contacts:** Share the news with closest relatives. Consider delegating phone calls or group messages to a trusted sibling or family friend to preserve your emotional energy during the initial hours.
- [ ] **Locate Pre-Arrangements or Written End-of-Life Wishes:** Check personal papers, safe-deposit boxes, or family files for prepaid funeral contracts, advance medical directives, organ donor declarations, or written instructions regarding burial or cremation wishes.
- [ ] **Notify the Employer and Volunteer Organizations:** If your loved one was actively working, inform their human resources department to halt payroll, coordinate workload transitions, and inquire about company life insurance, retirement benefits, or accrued leave pay.

Phase 2: Within the First Few Days

Focus on memorial planning, protecting property, and ensuring ongoing daily care for pets and family members.

- [ ] **Attend Arrangement Conference at Stanfield Mortuary Service:** Meet with our funeral director to finalize burial or cremation options, service dates, casket or urn selection, viewing hours, clergy or officiants, music, and cemetery details. Please bring vital statistics (SSN, birthdate, parents' full names, and DD-214 discharge papers for veterans).
- [ ] **Secure Real Estate, Vehicles, and Tangible Valuables:** If the deceased lived alone, lock the house, garage, and outbuildings. Park vehicles securely. Remove cash, high-value jewelry, and sensitive documents. Ask a trusted neighbor to monitor the home, especially during visitation and funeral service hours.
- [ ] **Arrange Immediate Care for Pets and Dependents:** Place domestic pets with a caring relative, friend, or reputable kennel with their familiar food and medications. Ensure minor children or dependent adults have immediate, loving care and stable routines.
- [ ] **Set Up Mail Forwarding with the U.S. Postal Service:** Submit an official change-of-address form with the USPS to forward mail to the executor or designated family representative. This prevents visible mail buildup and helps identify active accounts, creditors, and unknown assets.
- [ ] **Draft and Approve the Obituary:** Compose the biographical summary, list of surviving family members, service details, and designated memorial charities. Stanfield Mortuary Service will coordinate newspaper publications and online memorial postings.

Phase 3: Two Weeks to One Month (Administrative & Estate Settling)

Take time to gather official documentation, establish legal authority, notify financial institutions, and protect the estate against fraud.

- ☐ **Obtain Certified Copies of the Death Certificate (5 to 10 Copies):** Stanfield Mortuary Service orders certified copies on your behalf via Virginia Vital Records. Original certified copies with raised seals are required by courts, banks, insurers, and title agencies.
- ☐ **Locate the Original Will and Confirm the Executor:** Review the Last Will and Testament, trust agreements, and safety deposit box records to identify the named executor. If no will exists, the local probate court will appoint an administrator under Virginia law.
- ☐ **Initiate Probate with the Franklin County Circuit Court:** Schedule an appointment with the probate clerk (540-483-3065) to qualify the executor or administrator, record the will, and establish authority to collect assets and settle legitimate estate debts.
- ☐ **Notify Social Security Administration and Virginia DMV:** We electronically submit initial death reports to SSA, but survivors should call 1-800-772-1213 to confirm survivor benefits and adjust benefit payments. Cancel the driver's license with the DMV to prevent identity fraud.
- ☐ **File Life Insurance and Pension Claims:** Submit certified death certificates and claim forms to insurance carriers, fraternal benefit societies, pension plan managers, and retirement custodians (401k/IRA).
- ☐ **Notify Financial Institutions and Retitle Accounts:** Present death certificates to transition joint accounts, claim Payable-on-Death (POD) funds, and establish a dedicated estate checking account for estate disbursements and receipts.
- ☐ **Protect Credit and Identity with the Three Major Credit Bureaus:** Send notification to Equifax, Experian, or TransUnion to place a permanent deceased alert on credit reports, preventing fraudulent inquiries or unauthorized account openings.
- ☐ **Manage Subscriptions, Utilities, and Digital Accounts:** Discontinue cell phone contracts, residential utilities, streaming services, and club memberships. Memorialize or delete Facebook, Instagram, and email accounts after estate access is finalized.
- ☐ **Consult a CPA or Tax Professional for Final Filings:** Coordinate with an accountant to file the final individual return (Form 1040) and determine if an estate fiduciary income tax return (Form 1041) is required.

Important Contacts & Resource Directory

AGENCY / ORGANIZATION	PRIMARY FUNCTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Stanfield Mortuary Service	24/7 Funeral Care & Family Guidance	**(540) 483-2902** • 2491 S. Main St, Rocky Mount, VA
Social Security Administration	Survivor Benefits & Record Updates	1-800-772-1213 • www.ssa.gov
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Veterans Burial Benefits & Headstones	1-800-827-1000 • www.va.gov
Franklin County Circuit Court	Probate Office & Will Qualification	(540) 483-3065 • 275 S. Main St, Suite 212, Rocky Mount, VA
Credit Bureaus (Fraud Alert)	Equifax / Experian / TransUnion	Equifax: 888-378-4329 • Experian: 888-397-3742 • TransUnion: 800-916-8800

Family Case & Estate Information Record

Name of Loved One:	_____	**Date of Passing:**	_____
Stanfield Service Case #:	_____	**Certified Copies Ordered:**	_____
Designated Executor:	_____	**Estate Attorney / CPA:**	_____

Stanfield Mortuary Service is honored to walk beside your family every step of the way. Please call us at (540) 483-2902 whenever we can assist you.