



# AIKENS FUNERAL HOME



“WHAT TO DO IMMEDIATELY AFTER A LOSS”

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

**AIKENS FUNERAL HOME**

“WHERE EVERYTHING MATTERS”



"Where Everything Matters"

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE



## A Message to Our Families

When a loss occurs, the moments that follow can feel overwhelming.

At **Aikens Funeral Home**, our role is to provide clarity, calm, and compassionate guidance during one of life's most difficult times. You do not have to navigate this alone.

This checklist has been thoughtfully prepared to help guide you through the steps ahead. Our team will walk with you every step of the way.



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# NOTIFICATION

If the death occurs outside of a hospital, nursing home, hospice facility, or is not under hospice care, please call 911 to report the death.



When speaking with emergency personnel or your funeral director, be prepared to provide the following information:

- Name of the deceased
- Location of the deceased
- Your name, contact information, and relationship to the deceased
- Name and contact information for the next of kin who will be in charge of the arrangements

When you are ready, contact Aikens Funeral Home at (813) 232-8725. We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including weekends and holidays.

Notify insurance companies of the death.

*If you are planning to use insurance proceeds to pay for the arrangements, please do not initiate a claim at this time. This process can be handled more efficiently and with fewer delays through your funeral director.*





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# NOTIFICATION

Notify the deceased's employer and the employer's personnel or insurance department. Be sure to inquire about any available benefits, including group life insurance, survivor benefits, profit-sharing plans, and/or pension funds that you may be entitled to receive.

Notify close family members and friends.



Locate the will and notify the appropriate individuals.

Notify insurance companies of the death. *If you are planning to use insurance proceeds to pay for the arrangements, please do not initiate a claim at this time.*

*This process can be handled more efficiently and with fewer delays through your funeral director.*





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# GATHERING INFORMATION

You will need the following information for the funeral arrangement conference and for the completion of the death certificate:

- Social Security number
- Date of birth
- Deceased's parents' names, including the mother's maiden name
- Place of employment (name, address, and occupation), even if retired
- Information regarding the deceased's education
- Marital status of the deceased. Determine who will be responsible for the funeral expenses.



*If expenses will be shared, please ensure your funeral director is informed in advance.*





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# FUNERAL HOME DECISIONS

Provide a recent photograph of the deceased.

*This will be used for the obituary notice and for preparation and cosmetic purposes.*

Consider what type of service you plan to have.

*This will help determine whether embalming is necessary. Your funeral director will guide you through this decision and explain all available options. You may also visit the [Our Services page](http://www.AikensFuneralHome.com) of our website ([www.AikensFuneralHome.com](http://www.AikensFuneralHome.com)) for additional information.*

Decide on clothing and jewelry.

*There is me to make these decisions, but you may choose to bring these items with you to the arrangement conference. Clothing may include outerwear, undergarments, socks, or knee-high stockings. Shoes are not required but will be used if provided.*

Decide whether you would like an open-casket or closed-casket service.

Determine when the viewing and funeral service will be held.

Determine transportation requirements for immediate family members.

Provide family photos for use in the funeral service slideshow.

Provide any pre-arrangement paperwork.

Provide cemetery information (if applicable).



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# CEMETERY DECISIONS

If a cemetery lot has already been purchased, please bring the deed with you to the funeral home.

*If a cemetery lot has not yet been purchased, you may begin considering which cemetery property you plan to use. Your funeral director will provide information on the available options and guide you through the selection process.*

*A partial listing of local cemeteries is also available under the Resources tab of our website ([www.AikensFuneralHome.com](http://www.AikensFuneralHome.com)).*

## You will need to decide:

- Type of burial (in-ground, cremation, or mausoleum)
- Lot location
- Type of vault (concrete box, grave liner, or sealed vault).  
Your funeral director will explain the differences between these options, including which cemeteries require them, and help you determine what is most appropriate for your needs.
- Type of memorial marker and its inscription





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# FUNERAL SERVICE DECISIONS

Contact your clergy or officiant (if applicable). If needed, **Aikens Funeral Home** has experienced ministers and musicians on staff who are available to assist in creating a meaningful and personalized service.

Decide on the time and place for the funeral or memorial service. Services may be held at one of our chapels or at a location of your choosing.

## Our facilities include:

- **Peace Chapel**, which accommodates approximately 125 guests
- **Chapel of Hope**, which comfortably seats up to 250 guests. Additional images and details of our chapels are available on the **Tour Our Facilities** page of our website [www.AikensFuneralHome.com](http://www.AikensFuneralHome.com)

Ask about our **Aikens Family Concierge Service** — we handle everything so you don't have to.

Decide on the type of service, music, and any additional elements. Some fraternal organizations and military branches may provide special ceremonies as part of the funeral service.

Decide who will deliver the eulogy. If desired, our staff chaplains are available to assist.

Decide if there will be any military honors or participation from fraternal organizations, sororities, or other affiliations.

Decide who will serve as pallbearers; typically, six to eight individuals are selected.

Consider any personal touches for the service. **Our Concierge and Specialty Services** allow families to create a truly meaningful experience and may include options such as horse and carriage, dove release, balloon release, butterflies, and other customized elements to honor your loved one's life.



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# FUNERAL SERVICE NOTIFICATION

● We will provide you with a link that you may share with friends and family as you notify them of the date, time, and location of the following:

- Viewing
- Funeral service
- Reception

● Notify guests where flowers should be sent or where charitable donations may be made.



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## WRITING THE OBITUARY

Where Every Life is Honored, and Every Detail Matters

At **Aikens Funeral Home**, we believe an obituary is more than an announcement—it is a lasting tribute that tells the story of a life well lived. Every word matters, and we are here to ensure your loved one's story is shared with dignity, beauty, and intention.



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# WRITING THE OBITUARY

## ● A Guided, Thoughtful Experience

To make this process as seamless as possible, we offer two convenient tools on our website to help you share your loved one's story at your own pace:

The Obituary Writer Tool (under the Resources tab), or Complete and submit our Obituary and Newspaper Notice Form (under the Immediate Need tab): [Begin Here – Obituary & Notice Form](#)

These tools are designed to gently guide you, ensuring nothing important is overlooked while allowing you the space to reflect and remember.

## ● Prefer White-Glove Assistance? We'll Take Care of Everything

If you prefer a more personal approach, simply share the details with us, and our team will thoughtfully craft a polished and meaningful obituary on your behalf.

We may ask for the following: A recent photograph, age and place of birth, education, career, and accomplishments, memberships, affiliations, or community involvement, military service and honors (if applicable) and names of surviving family members.





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# WRITING THE OBITUARY

## ● Sharing Their Story with the World

Whether you choose to publish locally, in your loved one's hometown, or both, we will handle all coordination and submissions, ensuring everything is placed accurately and on time.

## ● Attention to Every Practical Detail

As part of our commitment to serving you fully, we will also guide you in determining the appropriate number of certified death certificates needed for legal and financial matters. Additional copies can always be requested through our office whenever needed.

# FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

All of our service packages include floral arrangements. However, you may wish to consider additional details such as the colors and types of flowers selected.

Family members and friends may also choose to order additional floral arrangements. To ensure timely delivery for the services, they are encouraged to order directly through our website or online at: [www.FlowersForTheService.com](http://www.FlowersForTheService.com)





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# FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

Send thank-you notes to those who sent flowers, made donations, or contributed their time.

You will receive a box of acknowledgment cards in your family bag at the conclusion of the service.

Carefully review all life insurance policies and death benefits, including Social Security, credit unions, trade unions, fraternal organizations, and military benefits.

Check on possible income sources for survivors.

Ensure that any installment payments remain current.

Notify banks, insurance carriers, mortgage lenders, creditors, utility companies, and the Post Office of the death.

Your funeral director will notify Social Security.

Check for funds or benefits available through credit unions. Some institutions provide life insurance benefits.

Review health insurance coverage for yourself and your children, if it was carried by the deceased.

Check automobile and/or accident insurance policies.





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# FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

If the death was accidental, you may be entitled to benefits or refunds on unused premiums.

If your loved one was a member of a labor union, notify the union and inquire about any available survivor benefits.

Contact any fraternal organizations of which the deceased was a member, as they may provide additional benefits.

Apply for Social Security benefits at your local Social Security office, if applicable.

Obtain hospital and medical statements as soon as possible.

Maintain an up-to-date record of all income and expenses.

Plan to pay all outstanding bills and taxes as soon as possible, including income taxes, real estate taxes, mortgage payments, and medical expenses.

**Before doing so, check for any credit life insurance that may have been in place to cover debts such as a home, vehicle, or appliances.**

For legal matters concerning the estate, we recommend contacting an attorney. They can assist with probate, inheritance matters, estate taxes, and other legal considerations.

Draw up or update your own will.



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## FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

Update beneficiary designations on any inherited accounts.

Transfer real estate titles for jointly held property through the Register of Deeds office in the appropriate county.

Transfer automobile titles into your name.

Update ownership of stocks and bonds into your name or jointly with surviving family members.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AFTER THE SERVICE

We understand that the responsibilities following a loss can feel overwhelming.

In addition to the guidance we provide, **Aikens Funeral Home** offers access to trusted resources that can assist families with many of the administrative tasks that follow, including account notifications, benefit coordination, and estate-related matters.

If you would like assistance navigating these next steps, our team will be happy to guide you and connect you with available support.



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# FINAL THOUGHTS



**You do not have to go through this alone. One call connects you to a team that will guide you every step of the way.**

If you have any questions, or if you would prefer for us to guide you through each step, our team is here for you—day or night.

**Aikens Funeral Home**

**(813) 232-8725**

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