

# A Death in Your Family



This booklet is for people who want to know more about -

- What to do first when a family member dies;
- Making funeral arrangements;
- Where to find support.



THIS BOOKLET PROVIDES PUBLIC LEGAL INFORMATION ONLY.  
IF YOU NEED LEGAL ADVICE YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LEGAL PROFESSIONAL.

FREE

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# Glossary of Terms

<b>Autopsy</b>	A specialized surgical procedure that consists of a thorough examination of a corpse to determine the cause and manner of death and to evaluate any disease or injury that may be present.
<b>Assets</b>	What you own. Assets can include things such as money, land, investments, and personal possessions such as jewelry and furniture.
<b>Coroner</b>	A coroner is a government official who investigates human deaths, determines cause of death, and issues death certificates.
<b>Death Certificate</b>	Issued by vital statistics that declares the date, location and cause of a person's death as later entered in an official register of deaths.
<b>Disposition Permit:</b>	A document which outlines how human remains will be disposed of.
<b>Estate</b>	All of the property and belongings you own at your death. The estate does not include property you own with someone else in joint tenancy, or joint bank accounts.
<b>Hospice</b>	Facility that provides special care for people who are near the end of life.
<b>Medical Certificate</b>	A legal document issued by a qualified medical practitioner certifying the death of a person.

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Terms used in this glossary are underlined in their first instance of use.

# Immediate Details Following a Death

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## Expected death at home

If this is an expected death and the family member dies at home, it is likely you are already in regular contact with your family doctor and home care nurse. Your deceased family member may have discussed his or her wishes with the doctor or the nurse. In cases where the forms have been signed for “No CPR” (No Cardiopulmonary-Resuscitation), there is no need to call an ambulance.

Immediately after the death, you may choose to spend some time with your deceased family member and participate in rituals that are in keeping with your spiritual beliefs. You can take the time you need before calling the family doctor or the nurse. If it is late at night, you may wait until morning before calling.

The family doctor may come to pronounce the death or give the attending nurse permission to pronounce the death. This is often done to provide assurance and support to the family and verify that this was an expected, natural death.

If the doctor has already signed the form called Notification of Expected Death, a pronouncement will not be necessary.

## Removal of the body

There is no legal requirement about the timing for the removal of the body from home, although there is a legal requirement about who can authorize the transportation of the body. The funeral home can take the body directly from your home. The funeral home is legally required to obtain verbal or written authorization from the executor or the next-of-kin before removing the body.

There is no urgency to transfer the body. The Funeral Service Association of BC recommends that the family not wait more than 4 to 6 hours after the death has occurred to call the funeral home. For more information, visit: [www.bcfunerals.com](http://www.bcfunerals.com)

## Unexpected death at home

If an unexpected death occurs at home, call 911 immediately. You should also call your family doctor. The coroner may come at the request of the police or the doctor. An autopsy is not usually performed unless the doctor or coroner asks for one, or if the death was unusual or accidental.

## Expected death in hospital

If this is an expected death and your family member was in hospital, you would have contact with palliative care staff. At the death, a family physician or nurse will call you according to your instructions. You can spend some time in the room with your family member. In general, the hospital will wait for the family members to say their goodbyes.

In some hospice palliative care wards, the deceased may be taken directly to the funeral home.

## Unexpected death in hospital

An unexpected death in hospital will be reported to the coroner. In some cases, doctors will ask you to consent to an autopsy of the body or the coroner may be required by law to do one.

If your child dies in hospital, doctors may ask you to consent to an autopsy. An autopsy is the parent’s decision except where the autopsy is required by law. To find out when an autopsy may be required by law, see page 4 “When might a coroner be involved?” in this publication.

## What is a medical certificate of death?

When a person dies in British Columbia, the death must be registered with the BC Vital Statistics Agency. The first step in the process is the completion of the Medical Certificate of Death. This is not the same as the Death Certificate.

It is the responsibility of the funeral home or funeral provider to ensure they obtain the Medical Certificate to enable them to register the death.

A doctor or coroner will usually complete and sign a Medical Certificate of Death within 48 hours of the death.

- **If the family member died at home**, the family doctor or the coroner will complete the Medical Certificate of Death.
- **If the family member died in hospital**, staff will contact the resident doctor to sign the Medical Certificate of Death, or the funeral home will make arrangements to have the family doctor complete the Medical Certificate of Death.

Even though the Medical Certificate is signed and the body is technically released, the funeral home cannot pick up the deceased until the hospital provides permission. In the case of private care hospitals without morgues or storage facilities, you likely have already given the private facility the name of the funeral home of your choice. Once the doctor or attending professional has pronounced the death and signed the Medical Certificate, the private hospital would contact the funeral home to remove your family member.

## When might a coroner be involved?

The Coroners Service of British Columbia is responsible for the investigation of all unnatural, sudden and unexpected, unexplained, or

unattended deaths. It is the coroner's duty to confirm who, how, when, where, and by what means the death occurred. The coroner then classifies the death as natural, accidental, suicide, homicide, or undetermined. Anyone may report a death to the coroner including agencies, hospitals or doctors.

If the coroner's preliminary investigation reveals the death is a natural event, the coroner will consult the family doctor to ensure the nature of death is consistent with the deceased's medical history. If there is no concern, the family doctor completes the Medical Certificate of Death.

## What is an autopsy?

Either the coroner or the doctor can order an autopsy if they cannot determine the cause of death or if the death took place in suspicious circumstances. A trained pathologist performs the autopsy. The autopsy is usually carried out within 48 hours. When the autopsy is completed, the coroner releases the body to the next-of-kin. Funeral arrangements can then go ahead.

If the autopsy is not required by law, next-of-kin must sign a consent form before an autopsy can be done. Before you give consent for an autopsy, make sure that you understand the reasons for the autopsy. Keep a copy of the signed autopsy form. You can refuse to give consent for an autopsy, unless it is required by law.

You can request an autopsy. If you ask for an autopsy and it is not ordered by a doctor or coroner, you will have to pay for it. Ask ahead of time how much it will cost.

The results of the coroner's investigation are released in a public document called a Judgment of Inquiry. It is available by request from the Regional Coroner's office. The report incorporates information from all agencies involved in the death, including police, ambulance, and hospitals. It also contains the findings of the autopsy. The autopsy report itself

is confidential and is released only under certain conditions.

In some cases there will be an inquest. A coroner's inquest is a formal court proceeding that allows for the public presentation of all evidence relating to a death. The coroner has a fact-finding role, not a fault-finding role. The inquest does not decide criminal or civil liability.

## What information does the funeral home need right away?

Your deceased family member may have made arrangements with a funeral home, and may even have prepaid for services. He or she also may have left instructions in a Will. Check to see if they made prior arrangements. If they have not been made, contact a funeral home. A funeral home representative may visit your home to help you make the arrangements.

If the deceased was a member of a memorial society, check with the funeral home to see if they have a contract with that society. If not, ask whether they will agree to provide services for the same cost as the memorial society.

You will need to provide the funeral home with certain personal information about the deceased:

- Full name
- Residential address
- Date and place of birth
- Date of death
- Place of death
- Name of spouse (maiden name required)
- Name of parents (mother's maiden name required) and places of birth
- Social Insurance Number
- Personal health number on the deceased's BC Care Card
- Any military service or veterans affairs numbers

- Occupation
- Length of time in occupancy
- Marital status
- Name of executor

## What is involved in the death registration?

After the funeral home has received the Medical Certificate of Death and obtained the personal information about the deceased, they can complete the Death Registration form. This form goes to Vital Statistics.

## What do I need to know about death certificates?

The funeral director will ask you how many "original" Death Certificates you will require. The fee is set by Vital Statistics and may change at any time.

You will need the Death Certificate to notify the institutions that handled the deceased's affairs. Some institutions will require either the original document or a notarized copy of the Death Certificate, while others will accept a regular copy. You may wish to order two originals, then have additional "certified true copies" prepared by a Notary Public or a lawyer.

Almost all funeral homes in BC are registered as "Registrars" of Vital Statistics. They administer the documentation onsite and can produce the Death Certificate. This means that for up to 3 months, the funeral home can produce more Death Certificates upon request.

After that time, you must apply directly to the office of Vital Statistics in Victoria; the processing may take 4 to 6 weeks.

Anyone may order and receive a Death Certificate for a person who has died in British Columbia. The release of a Death Certificate is not limited to immediate family.

## How can I get information about the cause of death?

The Medical Certificate of Death contains information about the cause of death. Neither the Death Registration nor the Death Certificate has that information.

If you are a member of the immediate family, you can obtain a certified copy of the Medical Certificate of Death by requesting it from the family doctor, the coroner involved, or the doctor who originally signed it. Only immediate family members are eligible to obtain a certified copy of the Medical Certificate of Death.

## What is a disposition permit?

When the death is registered, a **Disposition Permit** is produced along with the Death Certificate. The permit typically has 3 parts: one each for the funeral home, person conducting the funeral cemetery or crematorium.

It is illegal to bury or cremate human remains unless you have a Disposition Permit issued under the *Vital Statistics Act*. Usually the funeral home obtains the permit.

## Who do I need to notify of the death?

The first people to notify are the family doctor, the funeral home, and family members.

If there is no Will or executor, the next-of-kin has the right to control what happens to the body of the family member. In some cases, you may wish to know who within the family has priority as next-of-kin, after the executor or spouse.

The executor or the administrator is responsible for making funeral arrangements and paying for them from the deceased person's **estate**.

Many people and institutions will need to be notified. Tasks may include contacting

the federal government about pensions and the land registry about property your family member owned. In most cases, these tasks are not urgent. They can be left to the executor or administrator to handle.

## What is organ donation?

Hospital staff may ask if you wish to donate your deceased family members' organs. Your family member may have left instructions or, as next-of-kin, you can give your consent when they ask if the family member wished to donate organs and tissue.

## What if your deceased family member wished to donate organs and tissue?

He or she may have made a decision to donate organs and tissue and may have discussed those wishes with you. Or the wishes may be recorded in the Will.

In BC, the *Human Tissue Gift Act* regulates organ and tissue transplants or donations. This law governs donations made after a donor's death, as well as donations made from one living person to another.

The BC Transplant Society is responsible for all aspects of organ transplantation in BC. The Organ Donor Registry of the BC Transplant Society has replaced all previous ways of indicating organ donation.

When your family member dies in hospital, the medical staff enters the deceased's personal health number into the organ registry database. If the deceased is registered in the Organ Donor Registry, the system will send the hospital the form that indicates the deceased's decision. The medical staff will show you this form.

If your deceased family member was not registered with the Organ Donor Registry, medical staff will ask you as next-of-kin, if you are willing to have organs donated. While you

are not legally bound to do so, you may wish to make your decision based on what your family member would have wished.

## What is the body donation program?

If your family member donated his or her body for anatomy or medical studies, you need to make separate arrangements with the Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences at the University of British Columbia.

For more details about the donation process and to receive the “A Unique Contribution” brochure and body donor consent form, contact the UBC Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences:

Lower Mainland – 604.822.2578  
anatomy@interchg.ubc.ca  
www.cellphys.ubc.ca



## Making the Funeral Arrangements

Legally, the person named in the Will as the executor of the person’s estate has the responsibility for dealing with the body and arranging the funeral. If there is no executor, then the next-of-kin is responsible.

If you wish to know who within the family has priority as next-of-kin, after the executor or spouse, there is a list in the *Cremation, Interment*

*and Funeral Services Act*. See page 12, “Helpful Information”.

The Will may have instructions about the disposition of the body. The law says if there are written wishes, you should follow them unless the wishes are unreasonable, impossible to follow, or would cause hardship.

You may choose to hold a service or memorial in a manner and in a place that reflects the lifestyle and personality of your deceased family member.

There will be many details to finalize about the funeral or memorial service. You may wish to use the online information provided by the Funeral Service Association of BC.

By law, a deceased person must be buried or cremated. The body must be placed in a rigid container or casket that is sufficient to hold and transport the body and to prevent a health hazard. The casket or container could be homemade; it does not have to be provided by a funeral home.

There is no law that states a specific time-frame for burial. The timeline is usually determined by the need to secure all permits and authorizations, notify family and friends, prepare the cemetery site, and observe religious and cultural rituals. Because cremation is an irreversible process and eliminates any ability to determine cause of death, 48 hours must elapse after the time of death before cremation may take place.

## Funeral and cemetery costs

In British Columbia, funerals and cemeteries are regulated under two laws. The *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act* governs the nature of the contractual relationship between you and the funeral home and burial/cremation service. The *Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act* deals with specific aspects of cremation, as well as funeral and cemetery services.

All funeral providers and cemetery operators must be licensed with the Consumer Protection BC, which is responsible for the administration and enforcement of legislation concerning cemeteries, crematoriums, and funeral providers.

The funeral home will pick up the body, prepare the body for burial or cremation, and provide a casket or container to transport the body. They may also provide a range of optional services, from placing the **obituary notice** in the newspaper to arranging catering for the reception.

Prices for funeral services vary widely. All funeral providers must display a current price list of the services and products they offer. If you ask for prices over the phone, they must provide them to you.

When you meet with the funeral home staff to make the arrangements, make sure you know what you are purchasing and consider whether it really is what you want. While some services provided will be basic legal requirements, other services are optional, such as embalming.

Some funeral homes have a compassionate policy when a child has died. The funeral home will have expenses related to the funeral, such as fees for the cemetery or cremation, death certificates, and clergy. Some funeral homes require you to pay for those items prior to the funeral service. If you pay the funeral home directly, you must wait until after the estate is settled to receive reimbursement.

If you ask the funeral home for an invoice, you can take it to the bank; they will pay the funeral home directly from your deceased family member's account. The bank may wish to see a copy of the Death Certificate and the Will, if there is one.

If the family member served in the Canadian Armed Forces and had absolutely no **assets**, you

may be able to get help with funeral expenses from the Last Post Fund. This national non-profit organization provides grants to the spouse or family of a deceased veteran toward funeral and burial or cremation costs when the estate cannot afford to pay. Veterans include war veterans, merchant mariners, and qualified civilians.

The price for the funeral service does not include sale of a cemetery lot, i.e. a grave, crypt, or niche, or sale of a memorial marker, i.e. headstone, tombstone, monument, or plaque. You must arrange for these separately. The funeral home can assist you.

The prices of cemetery lots and memorial markers vary widely. Before purchasing a marker, make sure it meets the requirements of the cemetery you have selected. Most memorial dealers can tell you the requirements for local cemeteries.

The cremated remains are returned to the executor or person who has the legal authority to control the disposition of the cremated remains. As long as the cremated remains are treated with respect, the law does not limit what you can do with them. You can scatter the remains, keep them at home, take them overseas, put them in a garden on private property, or inter them in a cemetery.

If permitted by municipal bylaws, the remains can be scattered on land, sea, or air or in any place that has personal meaning. The Funeral Service Association of BC has information about cremation on their Website, "Burial and Cremation."

## **What if I need more information or have a complaint?**

If you need more information or have a complaint about a cemetery, crematorium, or funeral home, you may wish to contact one of the following.



- Cemetery and Crematorium Association of BC
- Funeral Service Association of BC

Both non-profit groups have extensive information and can provide assistance with problem-solving.

If you have a complaint and cannot resolve the problem, send your complaint in writing to the Consumer Protection BC. They have the authority to investigate.



## Managing Affairs

Legally, only the executor appointed under the will or administrator appointed by the court has the right to deal with the assets and property of the person who has died. An executor must get a grant of probate of the will from the court to confirm his or her authority.

If your family member died without a will, a person seeking to be appointed as administrator must apply to the court for a grant of administration before he or she has the authority to deal with the assets.

If you are the executor or the person seeking to be the administrator, excellent information is available about what you need to do.

- Self-Counsel Press publication, British Columbia Probate Kit.
- People's Law School, Being an Executor, Power

of Attorney, and Writing a Will booklets.

- Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry website [www.nidus.ca](http://www.nidus.ca).

**If you cannot find the person's will**, you can check with his or her Notary Public or lawyer. You can also do a wills search through Vital Statistics or your local Government Agent. Fee for service applies and subject to change.

You need the following information to perform a wills search.

- Date and place of death
- Place and date of birth
- Full legal name and all alias names
- Occupation, if not retired

**If an executor is not involved or if you are the executor**, you may want to secure the assets. Make sure the following valuables are safe.

- Will or copies of the will
- Wallet, purse or briefcase
- Social insurance card, medical card, driver's license, etc.
- Credit cards, bank statements
- Utilities statements
- Life or property insurance policies
- Income tax papers

**You also may need to do the following.** Make sure the deceased's motor vehicle is locked in a safe place. Retain the keys and any valuable contents to hand over the executor. Retain access to the deceased's residence to take care of pets, make sure appliances are off.

Usually the executor or administrator will send a change of address to Canada Post so that the deceased's mail goes to the executor's address while he or she is dealing with the person's estate. It is the responsibility of the executor or administrator to notify institutions and cancel

credit cards, club memberships, magazine subscriptions, etc.

**Note:** This booklet is not intended to explain the process for obtaining a grant of probate or an appointment of an administrator or the process for the distribution of the deceased's assets.

## What do I need to know about benefits for survivors?

The following is a general overview for your information. Many of the tasks involved will be completed by the executor or administrator.

**If you had a joint account with right of survivorship,** you can withdraw the whole amount from the account at any time. If you encounter difficulties, speak to the bank manager. Once you have the Death Certificate, you can have the account transferred to your name alone.

**If the accounts were in the deceased's name alone,** notify the bank. Banks may release small amounts of money to the survivor before the estate is settled, but they are not required to do so. They will pay funeral expenses directly if presented with the bill. They will not reimburse a person who has paid the funeral home directly until the estate is settled.

**Money left to the designated beneficiary in insurance policies,** pension funds, and **RRSPs** passes outside the Will. If you are the designated beneficiary, contact the relevant institutions to learn what documents they need.

**If your spouse was receiving a government or private pension,** you may be entitled to a portion of the pension as the surviving spouse. Check with each agency.

Was your deceased family member a veteran, member of a union, or receiving a pension from another country? If so, there

may be pension benefits for survivors. For pensions, the estate or the survivor is entitled to keep the cheques issued in the month of your deceased family member's death.

**Note:** This applies to you if you are a dependent child of a parent who has died.

**The death benefit is payable to the estate or survivor** if the family member paid into the Canada Pension Plan (CCP).

CPP survivor benefits may be payable if the deceased is your spouse and you are under 60 or if you are a surviving child under 18 years of age or between the ages of 18 and 25 if attending school full-time.

**If the deceased was still employed,** benefits may be available. Death benefits payable by labour unions vary. They may be payable to the next-of-kin or the estate. The union office will have the information.

**If the death was due to a work-related,** benefits may be available from Workers' Compensation.

**If the death was due to a car accident,** benefits are available from ICBC. Also, the deceased's family members may bring a legal action for compensation if the accident were the fault of another.

**If the death was a result of a crime,** assistance and benefits may be available to survivors from the Crime Victim Assistance Program.

## What do I need to know about re-arranging my own legal affairs?

In time, you may wish to change your will if the death of your deceased family member means your old will is out of date.

It may be appropriate to review your arrangements for future planning, such as Power of Attorney,

Enduring Power of Attorney, Advance Health Care Directive, or Representation Agreement.

If you have lost your partner, you may need financial advice or help with reorganizing your banking arrangements. Talk to your bank or credit union.

## Bereavement Support

Grieving is an important process that requires more time than people often acknowledge or allow. Support during time of bereavement can help bring healing, renewal, and hope for the future.

Family and friends can be a great source of comfort. Expressing your feelings with them can help you in the grieving process. You also may wish to link up with resources in the community that offer comfort, support, referrals, and services, when needed.

## Glossary continued

<b>Morgue</b>	A place in which dead bodies are temporarily kept until identified and claimed or until arrangements for burial have been made.
<b>Next-of-kin</b>	A person's closest living blood relative or relatives.
<b>Obituary Notice</b>	A published notice of a death, sometimes with a brief biography of the deceased.
<b>Palliative Care</b>	Care which improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing life-threatening illness.
<b>Pathologist</b>	A doctor who specializes in medical diagnosis.
<b>RRSP</b>	A Registered Retirement Savings Plan or RRSP is an account that provides tax benefits for saving for retirement in Canada.
<b>Will</b>	A document, conforming to the requirements of British Columbia law, that contains directions for the disposal or distribution of a person's assets after his or her death.

All fees stated in this booklet were accurate at time of publishing. Contact service provider to check rates.

Booklets are available online at:



[www.publiclegaled.bc.ca](http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca)



[www.clicklaw.bc.ca](http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca)

# Helpful Information

## Information about Bereavement

BC Bereavement Helpline	A non-profit society that facilitates the care and support of the bereaved throughout BC.	Box 53530, 984 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V5Z 1K7 Lower Mainland - 604.738.9950 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.877.779.2223
BC Children’s Hospital	Offers support services for parents on the death of a child.	4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3N1 Lower Mainland - 604. 875.2345 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.888.300.3088 <a href="mailto:FSRC@cw.bc.ca">FSRC@cw.bc.ca</a> <a href="http://www.bcchildrens.ca">www.bcchildrens.ca</a>

## Information about Burial and Cremation

Consumer Protection BC	Responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Consumer Protection Act and the Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act.	PO Box 9244, Victoria, BC V8W 9J2 Lower Mainland - 604.320.1667 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.888.564.9963 <a href="http://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca">www.consumerprotectionbc.ca</a>
Cemetery and Crematorium Association of BC	A non-profit provincial death-care association that provides information for cremation, cemetery and memorialization professionals.	PO Box 10082, Aldergrove, BC V4W 3Z5 Lower Mainland – 604.866.7292 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.866.587.3213 <a href="mailto:info@ccabc.org">info@ccabc.org</a> <a href="http://www.ccabc.org">www.ccabc.org</a>
Funeral Service Association of BC	A non-profit association that provides general information about funeral services in BC. The section of their website, “When a death occurs”, has information about what do first, how to contact the funeral home, and what to expect.	211 – 2187 Oak Bay Avenue Victoria, BC V8R 1G1 Victoria – 250.592.3213 Toll-free: 1.800.665.3899 <a href="mailto:info@bcfunerals.com">info@bcfunerals.com</a> <a href="http://www.bcfunerals.com">www.bcfunerals.com</a>

## Memorial Societies

The People’s Memorial Society of BC	A non-profit and locally-operated society that provides pre-arrangement, burial, cremation, memorial, funeral, and transfer services.	505 St. Main , Vernon BC V1T 9Z9 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.800.661.3358 <a href="mailto:info@peoplesmemorialsocietybc.com">info@peoplesmemorialsocietybc.com</a> <a href="http://www.peoplesmemorialsocietybc.com">www.peoplesmemorialsocietybc.com</a>
Memorial Society of BC	A non-profit organization that helps to plan funerals that are simple, dignified and affordable.	205 - 640 West Broadway Vancouver BC V5Z 1G4 Lower Mainland – 604.733.7705 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.888.816.5902 <a href="mailto:mail@memsoc.org">mail@memsoc.org</a> <a href="http://www.memorialsocietybc.org">www.memorialsocietybc.org</a>

## Information about Legal and Medical Matters

British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association	Provides leadership and support for its member organizations and individuals. Its goal is to ensure quality care for British Columbians faced with a life-threatening illness, death, and bereavement.	502 – 1081 Burrard Street Vancouver, BC V6Z 1Y6 Lower Mainland - 604.806.8821 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.877.422.4722 <a href="mailto:office@hospicebc.org">office@hospicebc.org</a> <a href="http://www.bchpca.org">www.bchpca.org</a>
Vital Statistics Agency	The British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency is responsible for the registration of births, marriages, and deaths in British Columbia. Offices are located in Victoria, Vancouver, and Kelowna.	PO Box 9657 Stn Prov Govt Victoria, BC V8W 9P3 Lower Mainland – 604.660.2937 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.888.876.1633 <a href="http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca">www.vs.gov.bc.ca</a>
Coroners Service	The Coroners Service of British Columbia is a division of the Ministry of Public Safety Solicitor General and for the Province of BC. It is responsible for the inquiry/ investigation of all unnatural, unexpected, unexplained, or unattended deaths.	Chief Coroner’s Office Metrotower II 800 – 4720 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2 Lower Mainland – 604.660.7745 Enquiry BC: 1.800.663.7868 <a href="mailto:BC.CorSer@gov.bc.ca">BC.CorSer@gov.bc.ca</a> <a href="http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners">www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners</a>
Public Guardians and Trustee Office	Administers estates of people in BC who die with or without a Will when an executor, family member, or other eligible person either does not wish or is unable to carry out the administration of the estate.	700 – 808 West Hastings Street Vancouver, BC V6C 3L3 Lower Mainland – 604.660.4444 Enquiry BC – 1.800.663.7867 <a href="mailto:mail@trustee.bc.ca">mail@trustee.bc.ca</a> <a href="http://www.trustee.bc.ca">www.trustee.bc.ca</a>
British Columbia Transplant Society	The British Columbia Transplant Society (BCTS) directs, delivers, or contracts for all organ transplant services across BC.	555 West 12th Avenue (West Tower) Vancouver, BC V5Z 3X7 Lower Mainland – 604.877.2240 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.800.663.6189 <a href="mailto:BCTS_Webmaster@bcts.hnet.bc.ca">BCTS_Webmaster@bcts.hnet.bc.ca</a> <a href="http://www.transplant.bc.ca">www.transplant.bc.ca</a>
Will and Estates: Attorney General	The Ministry of Attorney General website has information about Wills and Estates, including the Probate registry.	<a href="http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/other/wills_estates.htm">www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/other/wills_estates.htm</a>
Probate Kit, Self-Counsel or Press	Provides step-by-step instructions and includes all the required forms on enclosed CD-ROM. This kit also contains Administration Forms, which you will need if no valid will is available.	<a href="http://www.self-counsel.com">www.self-counsel.com</a> You can also find Self-Counsel Press publications for sale in many bookstores and in your local public library.
Lawyer Referral Service	The Service enables members of the public to consult with a lawyer for up to 30 minutes for a fee of \$25, plus taxes.	Lower Mainland – 604.687.3221 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.800.663.1919 <a href="mailto:lawyerreferral@bccba.org">lawyerreferral@bccba.org</a>

The Society of Notaries Public	A Notary Public can provide assistance with notarizing Death Certificates and providing extensive information about wills and estates. Contact the Society office to obtain the name and telephone number of a Notary Public near you. Ask the Notary Public how much it will cost for the first meeting.	Box 44, 1220 - 625 Howe Street Vancouver, BC V6C 2T6 Lower Mainland – 604. 681.4516 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.800.663.0343 <a href="http://www.notaries.bc.ca">www.notaries.bc.ca</a>
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## Information about Benefits

Service Canada	On the Service Canada website, the section called “What to Do Following a Death” includes information about benefits available under the Canada pension Plan. Look under “Additional Information for the Canada Pension Plan and Other Death Related Benefits”.	PO Box 1177 Station CSC Victoria BC V8W 2V2 1.800.O-Canada (1.800.622.6232) Hearing or speech impairment – 1.800.926.9105 <a href="http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca">www.servicecanada.gc.ca</a>
Ministry of Social Development	When a person dies and there are no resources for funeral expenses, through either the individual’s estate or family, the Ministry of Social Development may help with these costs.	To locate an office near you, call: 1.666.866.0800 <a href="http://www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/Funerals.htm">www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/Funerals.htm</a>
The Crime Victim Assistance Program	Administered by the Victim Service Division of the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Immediate family members of an injured or deceased victim may be eligible for financial assistance and benefits including funeral expenses.	PO Box 5550 Station Terminal Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H1 Lower Mainland – 604. 660.3888 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.866.660.3888 <a href="mailto:SGCrimeVictimAssistanceProgram@gov.bc.ca">SGCrimeVictimAssistanceProgram@gov.bc.ca</a> <a href="http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/financial/index.htm">www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/financial/index.htm</a>
ICBC	Will provide no-fault accident benefits, including payment for the cost of funeral expenses or \$2500, whichever is less.	Lower Mainland – 604.661.2800 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.800.663.3051 <a href="http://www.icbc.com">www.icbc.com</a>
The Last Post, Veterans Affairs Canada	Its primary mandate is to deliver the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral and Burial Program which provides funeral, burial and grave marking benefits for eligible Canadian and Allied Veterans.	203 – 7337, 137th Street Surrey, BC V3W 1A4 Lower Mainland – 604.572.3242 Outside Lower Mainland – 1.800.268.0248 <a href="mailto:lpfinfowest@lastpost.ca">lpfinfowest@lastpost.ca</a> <a href="http://www.lastpostfund.ca">www.lastpostfund.ca</a>
WorkSafe BC	Dedicated to promoting workplace health and safety for the workers and employers of this province. “For Families: A Guide for Families Coping with a Work-Related Death or Terminal Illness” booklet, is available on their website.	<a href="http://www.worksafebc.com">www.worksafebc.com</a>

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