

Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve



Practical Steps when Someone Dies

For many, the death of someone close is an unfamiliar event. Even when it is not the first time we've had to cope with it, the moment can leave us overwhelmed. We hope the following list of down-to-earth practicalities will be of value as guidelines and reminders. The language used here is straight forward, to encourage you to go through each step with strength and clarity.

At the Time of Death

When someone dies in hospital, or is pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital, you should be given a reasonable amount of time with them before they are taken away or you are asked to leave. If the staff appear hurried or impatient, they are probably just busy – you do have the right to assert your own need to have time alone with your loved one. It will usually be a Patient Affairs Officer who lets you have their belongings, including any valuables which may have been put into safe keeping. They will also be the person who gives you the *death certificate*.

In a nursing home or hospice, you should have time with your loved one. Indeed it may be necessary to wait until the doctor can come to provide the death certificate. However, if there is no mortuary onsite, they may be kept for the deceased to be taken to a funeral directors. If you have chosen a funeral director, or would like Sun Rising to act as your undertaker, make sure the staff know, ideally before the need arises.

When someone dies at home, you will need to contact your local doctor or GP, who will come to the house in order to certify the death. It may be necessary to collect the *death certificate* from your local surgery: the doctor or surgery staff will be able to let you know. If there is anything unexpected or unusual about the death, it may be necessary for the doctor to call in a police officer. If the GP cannot be absolutely sure of the cause of death, a post-mortem may be necessary, in which case the deceased may need to be taken to the mortuary used by the coroner. The doctor will provide you with the necessary information.

What Happens to the Deceased

In most cases, the deceased will be kept in the mortuary at a hospital or a funeral directors. It may be possible to see them between the time of death and the burial or cremation. Talk to the hospital staff, the funeral director or to us, and ask.

If the person has died at home, it may be possible to keep them at home for a few days. However, it is worth asking for advice first – your GP or practice nurse, your funeral director, or we at Sun Rising can give you some guidelines.

Registering the Death

The law states that a death must be registered *within 5 days* at the registry office in the district where the person died, usually by the next of kin. It doesn't cost anything, but no funeral arrangements or interment can take place until this has been done.

In **Warwickshire** call **0300 555 0255** and in **Oxfordshire** call **0845 129 5900** to make an appointment. You will be told what to bring with you to the appointment. At a minimum, you'll need the following at the registry office :

- the full name of the deceased
- the *death certificate* issued by the doctor or hospital
- the date and place of birth of the deceased
- any pension books or other social security benefit entitlements
- the full name of any surviving spouse.

The registrar will then give you a green *certificate of registration* - known informally as the **Green**. This form needs to be given to the funeral director if you are using one, or direct to us at Sun Rising if you are not, in order that the deceased may be buried or cremated. The registrar will also give you the Death Certificate. This is free, but you may need certified copies (for which there is a small charge), in order to legally close down the deceased's affairs, such as bank accounts, insurance policies and so on. The registrar will also provide you with a form if the deceased was claiming any social security. This you will then be able to give to the Social Security office who will put into motion all the necessary changes.

Arranging the Funeral

When it comes to arranging the funeral or cremation, you can either employ a funeral director or ask us about options for funerals without funeral directors.

It is important to find out if the deceased had a Will or a letter of Last Wishes stating what they wanted in terms of a funeral, and whether they wanted to be buried or cremated.

While you may feel comfortable with a more traditional funeral, remember that you have choices. Nowadays it is possible to have a funeral that is a very individual reflection of the person – whether that is a service in church and a quiet committal, an hour of Buddhist chanting and a picnic in the grass, a celebration of life with eulogies, tributes, music and poetry, or a gathering around the coffin with a bottle of wine, a Beethoven symphony and informal sharing of memories. Most funerals at Sun Rising have the service in the roundhouse. There are options for local venues, for the funeral service or for a gathering afterwards.

Cremation

If you have chosen cremation, you will need *cremation forms B and C* from the doctor or the hospital, for which there is a charge. There is paperwork to complete for a cremation that is not necessary for burial, but your funeral director will organise all this for you.

When interring ashes at Sun Rising, some choose a cremation direct, where nobody attends the crematorium, the funeral service taking place at Sun Rising at the time of interment.

Further Advice

At Sun Rising, we are happy to provide any further advice you may require. Please don't hesitate to get in touch: we are here to help. If you are working with a funeral director, do ask them for anything you may need.

Call us for more information or if you have any queries : 01295 688488.