

WHAT TO DO WHEN A FAMILY MEMBER DIES: A PRACTICAL AND HALACHIC GUIDE

The following document was prepared for members of YISE, by Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum and Hedy Peyser, MSW, as a practical and halachic guide to deal with the death of a family member. It will hopefully answer time-sensitive questions that may arise immediately following the loss of a family member. Please feel free to contact Rabbi Rosenbaum with any specific questions. Additionally, it would be very worthwhile to consult an attorney and or an accountant for practical advice regarding legal and financial matters before and after the death of a family member. This document will not be providing legal or financial advice.

There is much encouragement in the halachic literature for an individual to purchase a burial plot for one's self and spouse. Practically speaking, if a person did not yet have the opportunity to purchase a plot he/she will be doing a great kindness by asking where the individual would like to be buried.

Further, we also urge all members to have the appropriate paperwork completed and available prior to the loss of your loved one, which can assist during their illness and eventual death. The papers may include, cemetery documents, a will, trust(s), advanced directive, general power of attorney etc.

IF DEATH OCCURS IN THE HOSPITAL

Call your immediate family member(s), the funeral home and the Rabbi. If you are unsure of which funeral home to call, the Rabbi can assist you in making that decision, based on your specific preferences and he can assist in making arrangement with the funeral home. The funeral home plays a vital role both in preparing for and managing the funeral and in providing the necessary documentation at a later date. If a family member's demise seems imminent, it is worthwhile to decide on a funeral home and cemetery at that time.

Requests to hospital staff:

To the extent possible, the deceased should be allowed to be kept in the room until the funeral home arrives, as opposed to being transferred to the morgue. The deceased's mouth and eyes should be closed and covered with a sheet. Someone should stay in the room with the deceased reciting Tehillim until the funeral home staff arrives. It is preferable for the individual saying Tehillim to not be one of the close relatives who sit shiva (spouse, child, parent, or sibling) but if no one else is available, a close relative may recite Tehillim.

If applicable, Inform staff that the Pic line connections and the like that have been placed under the patient's skin should be detached from hospital equipment but kept attached to the patient. Additionally, the hospital staff should not wash the deceased. These steps will enable the Chevra Kadisha to deal with the deceased appropriately.

IF DEATH OCCURS AT HOME

Call your immediate family member(s), the police, the funeral home, the Rabbi and if relevant, hospice.

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum: CELL: 240-491-2639, HOME: 301-681-3988 OFFICE: 301-593-4465 X405

Name and phone number of personal physician: _____

Montgomery County Police: 301-279-8000 Notifying the police is required in Montgomery County

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IF DEATH OCCURS ON SHABBOS/YOM TOV:

If there is a significant amount of time left on Shabbos or Yom Tov (thereby causing concern regarding a suitable environment for the deceased) a non-Jew should be asked to place the appropriate phone calls necessary for the funeral home to pick up the deceased. If an individual's death seems imminent it might be wise to pre-register with a funeral home so that such Shabbos communication will go more smoothly.

FUNERAL HOMES

Make sure to request a Shomer, and a Tahara. Please contact Rabbi Rosenbaum if you would like an explanation of these terms and their necessity. The following are some of the funeral home options used most frequently by members of our community. Rabbi Rosenbaum would be happy to discuss the options in more detail with anyone who wishes to do so.

Torchinsky Hebrew Funeral Home: 254 Carroll St. NW DC 20012 202-541-1001, 301-495-3395, 1-800-500-5401, info@torchinsky.com

Hines-Rinaldi Funeral Home (make sure to refer to the package arranged by the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington): 11800 New Hampshire Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20904 301-622-2290

Shomrei Neshama 1091-B Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 301-296-6835 shomreineshama.com.

The Funeral Home may request the following information about the deceased: 1) Full Hebrew name 2) Date and place of birth 3) The parents' full names, including maiden names.

Make sure to tell the funeral home if there have been pre-arrangements. Which cemetery? You may also be asked to review legal documents which are required for burial.

THE FUNERAL HOMES WILL MAKE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHEVRAH KADISHA AND TAHARA. THE FUNERAL HOME CAN MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR BURIAL IN ISRAEL IF DESIRED, INCLUDING TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS WITH EL AL. OCCASIONALLY THE FAMILY MIGHT FIND IT HELPFUL TO CONTACT A GROUP SUCH AS MAALIN BAKODESH INDEPENDENTLY (SEE BELOW).

BURIAL IN ISRAEL:

Broker to assist with transport to Israel: IF NOT provided BY THE FUNERAL HOME

Maalin Bakodesh

3803 14th Ave Brooklyn, NY 11218

Phone: (718) 435-6100

AIRLINE

<u>EL AL</u>
1800-223-6700 for reservations
To have El Al make arrangement for shipping the casket call: 1-718-553-2190

CEMETERY IN ISRAEL

<u>ERETZ HACHAIM CALL 1-718-743-8779</u>
GRAVE SITE 17 MINUTES OUTSIDE OF Jerusalem at Mifgash Shimshon (on the road to Beit Shemesh)
BRING A COPY OF THE DEED FOR THE CEMETERY PLOT
The plots include perpetual care and a permit for monument placement. The monument is separate.
Eretz Hachim Cemetery Information:
Office in US. 1-718-437-2200 pager number 1-917-269-5083
Office in Israel: 02-991-1446 or 02-999-7526
Home page: www.cemetery-in-israel.com

Monument:

Matzevot Bet Shemesh Cellular +972-50-530-9280 or +972-57-730-9280 or +972-57-740-2640
mzvotbs@walla.co.il

PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL AND SHIVA

*Contact the Rabbi or shul office with information about the funeral and shiva. They can assist in determining davening times and shiva schedule.

*As long as shiva is being held in the area, shul volunteers provide shiva chairs, "hamokom yenachaim" sign, and if relevant, siddurim and a sefer torah.

* It is frequently helpful to designate a friend of the family who can serve as the contact for individuals who would like to assist with meals during shiva.

*Feel free to discuss halachos of mourning with the Rabbi. The shul also lends mourners a book that reviews these halachos.

OTHER PREPARATIONS

1. Notify, other Jewish organizations and local newspapers regarding the funeral and Shiva (place and time).
2. Prepare information for the eulogy
3. Prepare information for the newspaper(s) obituary

