

First 24 Hours Checklist

After a death in France



When someone dies, it can feel as though everything must be done at once. It doesn't. Only a few things genuinely need to happen in the first day or so. Use this page so you don't have to hold them all in your head.

Wherever the death occurred

- ☐ Confirm a doctor has certified the death and issued the **certificat de décès**
- ☐ Check the certificate: name, date of birth, date, time and place of death
- ☐ Get a copy, or find out clearly where and how to collect one
- ☐ Start a simple list of who you have told and when (paper or phone notes are fine)

Nothing else can go ahead without the certificat de décès. Registering the death, arranging the funeral and starting the succession with a notaire all depend on it.

If the death occurred at home

- ☐ Expected death: contact the treating doctor, hospice nurse or out-of-hours line
- ☐ Sudden or unexpected: call **15 (SAMU)** or **112**
- ☐ Avoid moving the person until a doctor has examined them
- ☐ Arrange immediate care for any pets or dependants in the home
- ☐ If the death is unexplained, expect the police or gendarmerie to be involved before the person is moved. This is standard procedure, not a sign of suspicion.

If the death occurred in hospital or a care home

- ☐ Decide where the person will go next: the hospital or care-home mortuary, or a funeral home (*chambre funéraire*) through a funeral director
- ☐ Ask to see the person before they are moved, if you wish
- ☐ Arrange collection of belongings and ask how long you have
- ☐ Confirm who staff should treat as the main contact for paperwork
- ☐ Ask for a copy of, or a reference number for, the medical certificate before you leave

Who I've told

Name	Date and time	Notes

Need a hand? I can speak to the mairie, funeral director or notaire for you.

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A practical guide only; it does not replace professional advice. Procedures can vary by commune and circumstance. In an emergency call 15 (SAMU) or 112.