

PEACEFUL PASSAGE AT HOME

Caring for our own after death

When the Death Occurs in Other Institutions (Hospice Houses, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Institutions)

It is important to inform any officials in the institutions where your loved one resides that you are planning to act as your own funeral director. It will most likely require some advocacy and education on your part since they may not have confronted this situation before.

Necessary documents to make the case if you face resistance:

- MA Law: malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter46/Section9
- MA Executive Office of Health and Human Service (EOHHS) Guidelines: <http://www.mass.gov/guides/issues-to-consider-in-preparing-for-disposition-of-decedents>

If necessary, ask the hospital staff to call this government official, who will verify that families have the right to act as their own funeral directors:

Karin Barrett, M.Ed.
Deputy State Registrar
Registry of Vital Records and Statistics
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
150 Mt. Vernon Street, 1st floor
Dorchester, MA 02125
Karin.Barrett@massmail.state.ma.us
617-740-2621

Here are two funeral directors in MA to call who know the law and can verify that families have this right. They can speak directly to officials in the hospital.

- Peter Stefan – Graham, Putnam and Mahoney – 508-754-1717
- John Anderson – Anderson-Bryant – 781-438-0135

To obtain the forms listed below go to:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/admin/dmoa/vitals/edrs/>

As a matter of courtesy, if possible, try to inform the Town Clerk, in the town where the death occurred, ahead of the death to let them know that the family will be acting as their own funeral director and therefore the Town Clerk will be expected to input the death certificate into the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS).

Before the death, the family should fill out the 5-page [Informant Worksheet for Certificate of Death](#), which spells out all the biographical information the Town Clerk will need, and the [Veteran Information Worksheet](#) (if applicable). It may be that the dying person has some of the information that will be needed on these documents. It may be that the dying person has some information that will be needed on these documents.

Hand carry to the doctor:

- The [document we created](#) to help doctors understand their responsibilities

Also bring:

- A clean paper copy of the [Death Certificate Medical Certifier Worksheet](#), which you have printed from the above link

Wait while the doctor fills out the Medical Certifier Worksheet. Check to see that it is completely filled out, e.g. it contains their license number and fax number.

Visit the Town Clerk and bring with you:

- Death Certificate Medical Certifier Worksheet filled out by the doctor
- Informant Worksheet for Certificate of Death filled out by the family
- Veteran Information Worksheet (if applicable)
- [Funeral Provider Worksheet](#) – Provides the town clerk with the name of the cemetery or crematory that the family has chosen

The town clerk may have never had the request for paperwork from a family regarding a death certificate since this is usually done by a funeral director. You

may want to bring a copy of the law and the EOHHS guidelines. It will be helpful to have the [list of other clerks](#) who have assisted families with this paperwork.

When the Town Clerk calls, return to Town Hall to sign the Death Certificate Informant Verification and Signature Form, which they will provide. Your signature means that all the information is correct.

The Town Clerk will call to say that the paperwork has been completed, submitted to the burial agent (board of health) and the Burial Transit Permit and Death Certificate are ready to be picked up. These documents allow the family to transport the body in a “rigid container” to the crematory or cemetery.

Crematories and cemeteries have their own individual paperwork that must be filled out. Call them ahead of time.

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