

Despite the intentions of the deceased and/or survivors, local climatic or sanitary conditions may dictate that burial must take place fairly quickly or cremation may be prescribed. The problems associated with returning a body to Canada are also made more difficult due to availability of transportation and the sheer distances involved. If return to Canada and internment there are contemplated, it is advisable to contact a funeral home without delay and, if possible, have a relative or friend on hand to meet you. Note that burial may not be possible in certain parts of Canada if the ground is frozen. Costs associated with keeping the body pending burial are at the family's expense.

Transportation expenses for return to Canada for eligible family members or, in certain circumstances, for an escort are payable under FSD 54. Upon completion of affairs at the place of internment, family members may return to the mission or place of study as the case may be. As mentioned above, where an employee dies, certain provisions of the FSDs will continue to cover the family members until it is practical for them to make arrangements to leave the mission on a final occasion.

In the event of death of an employee, it is advisable for his or her spouse, next-of-kin or executor to communicate with his or her assignment officer.

After the initial shock of a death, family members must settle into life without the loved one. There are many support services available across the country to help with this process. In most major centres there is a Community Information Centre which will have listings for support groups and counselling services for the local area. There are also funeral homes in some areas which provide a Family Support Centre. Books on coping with bereavement are available at libraries and book stores. It is not necessary to be alone during this difficult time.

Be Prepared

When a death occurs, the more aware you are of what is required the better able you will be to cope as a survivor or to help a newly bereaved friend. The following list of reminders has been prepared to assist you.

1. Have an up-to-date will together with birth certificates for each member of the family, Social Insurance numbers, marriage certificate, divorce decrees, adoption papers, change of name decree, and military discharge if applicable.
2. Have an up-to-date Next of Kin list and/or people to notify in case of death, accident or serious illness.
3. Make a list of all insurance policies, investments, mortgages, business contracts, stocks and bonds, debts, bank accounts etc. If separate bank accounts are not maintained, at least one account should be a joint "and/or", ("either/or") account to allow either spouse access in the event of the death of the other.
4. Inform someone, family member, friend, lawyer, executor of will, of your wishes in the event of sudden death. That someone should also know where all your important documents are kept. You may leave instructions for funeral arrangements and for organ donations if desired.

It is suggested that all the above-mentioned documents and information be left in safekeeping in Canada. A "joint tenant" safety deposit box at the bank is one consideration. It allows access in the event of a death to any person recorded. The regulations concerning safety deposit boxes may vary from province to province. Copies of any of the documents or information might be taken to the mission if desired.