

Steps to take after losing a loved one

There are many practical tasks to take care of after a death – now and over the next several months. It may feel overwhelming while you’re also grieving a special person. Don’t be shy about asking for help from family and friends.

This list can help you organize some of what needs to be done. It may not cover everything you need to do, but it can help you get started. If there’s an estate executor, that person may be responsible for many of these tasks.

Note: You’ll need an original death certificate for some tasks. Your funeral home can help you get copies.

| Some tasks to do right away | Complete |
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| Inform family and caregivers. | |
| Arrange for the care of children or dependents. | |
| Arrange for pets to stay with someone who can care for and comfort them. | |
| Notify your loved one’s school or employer. Ask their employer about benefits, life insurance, and final pay. | |
| Cancel health coverage for your loved one. | |
| Enroll any dependents in new health coverage . You generally have 60 days from the date of the person’s death to enroll in new coverage. | |
| Notify your loved one’s spiritual community. | |
| Request original copies of the death certificate from the funeral home or county clerk’s office. You’ll likely need several, and there’s a cost for each. | |

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| Let others help you | Complete |
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| Seek out people who care about you and know what you're going through, who can offer the love and support you need. | |
| Ask for help. Whether you need a hand with chores or just want companionship, don't be afraid to reach out to family and friends. | |
| Avoid making major life changes while grieving. | |
| Plan ahead for events when you might need more support, like holidays, anniversaries, and other special occasions. | |
| If you're part of a spiritual community, stay involved. | |
| Join a support group or meet with a grief counselor. | |

| Honor their memory | Complete |
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| Locate your loved one's will and review their final wishes. | |
| Consider planning a funeral or memorial service that celebrates the person's life and honors their wishes. | |
| Write and publish an obituary. Your funeral home can help. | |

| Manage estate and insurance | Complete |
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| Find the will and inform the executor. | |
| Notify banks and other financial institutions. | |
| Consider consulting an accountant about taxes. | |
| Inform insurance companies. | |

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| Update business and social media accounts | Complete |
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| If your loved one lived alone, forward their mail and deliveries to your address. | |
| Review their credit card accounts, subscriptions, and policies. Remove their name from joint accounts and cancel any personal accounts. | |
| Update or cancel utilities, mobile phone, Internet, and TV and streaming services. | |
| Prevent identity theft. Cancel their driver's license, close their email account, and send a copy of the death certificate to 1 of the 3 major credit bureaus. | |
| Update their voter registration. | |
| Memorialize or delete your loved one's social media accounts. (You may need to contact the platform for help.) | |

| Safely dispose of medications | Complete |
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| Bring any remaining medications or unwanted over-the-counter drugs to a drug collection kiosk at a participating Kaiser Permanente lobby. | |
| Learn how to dispose of unused medication from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. | |