



The First Ten Plays

WHEN SOMEONE DIES*

- Do not disturb the body until you have called the family doctor and then the city or county coroner's office. The coroner may be part of the Sheriff's office or department. You should have both numbers in your emergency phone list that is part of your Go-Kit.
- Obtain a death certificate as soon as possible. It is critical to have this so you can take the next steps.
- During a disaster event, ensure that the nature of the death, if due to a disaster, is noted on the death certificate. This is important for public record and for insurance purposes.
- You may need to clean the body if you are directed to do so by the doctor or coroner, prior to transport to a morgue or a funeral home. You may be able to get assistance with this from professional nursing agencies. If there is considerable cleaning to do then you may wish to contact a professional crime scene cleaning company.
- Contact family and friends. Be calm in your demeanor and have the facts of the situation written out before you call others. If you are under stress and distraught, it may be best if someone else makes the calls for you. There is no shame in letting others support you for death notifications, but choose someone with training and experience in death notifications.
- Ensure that if decedent had requests for organ donations, and that is still feasible, that those requests be honored.
- Find the person's preferences, preferably in writing, about how they wished their remains to be managed, either by burial or cremation. They may already belong to a society that will take care of these arrangements.
- Make appropriate arrangements with a funeral home.
- Contact Social Security and other agencies that may have been sending payments to the decedent to ensure the payments are stopped and that any death benefits are provided.
- Locate the will and final testament of the decedent, identify the person who will have power of attorney in behalf of the decedent, and begin to work through the financial affairs in accordance with last wishes.

** These are not listed in order of importance but as a group of materials that will increase the possibility of positive outcomes.*