

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

I am deeply saddened each time one of these pamphlets is given to a citizen, but faith has taught me about purpose in life. We must carry on and honor those who have left us.

Thankfully, we have dedicated individuals willing to help.

I know each of our chaplains personally, and I know them to be of the highest character. They have demonstrated a faithful

commitment to us with their volunteer work, and they are known to work long hours in highly emotional situations.

You can count on our chaplains to provide you with comfort and compassion as you grieve.



WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCE AT YOUR TIME OF LOSS

We hope the information in this pamphlet will ease your burden at this difficult time.

Should you continue to need our assistance, or if you just are looking for someone to listen and pray and support you, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

With our sincere and deepest sympathy,

AT YOUR TIME OF NEED



WE CAN HELP

A resource guide to assist you in coping with your loss and taking care of your loved one's personal matters

WHAT TO DO FIRST

1. Notify family and friends of the death • 2. Contact a funeral home
3. Identify the location of the deceased's belongings and remains

After the immediate needs are addressed, you may need to acquire a death certificate from the funeral home or county health department, and a copy of any police report about the death. If not yet available for release, ask the respective authorities when it is expected to be ready.

CORONER INFORMATION

Call (574) 533-4151 and request the coroner be paged if you have questions about the official decision on cause of death.

Generally, the coroner will not release the body until 24-48 hours have passed after the authorities were notified. You should make a note of the hospital at which the deceased was treated, if any.

Your funeral director will make all necessary arrangements with the coroner's office for transportation of the body.

CHOOSING A FUNERAL HOME

Reputation

Many families use services with which they are familiar. Perhaps you have visited a particular funeral home and felt comfortable with the surroundings and staff.

Location

A factor in selecting a location should be accessibility of the funeral home for all family members and friends. Nearby hotel accommodations, may be a necessity.

Price

Federal law requires all price information concerning funeral goods and services be made available by phone. You may also obtain a written price information sheet in form upon request.

CHECKLIST

- Notify friends and family**
- Make arrangements with a funeral home**
- Obtain death certificates**
- Contact banks and financial institutions**
- Pay current bills for mortgage, utilities, etc.**
- Check on employee benefits and life insurance policies**
- Contact Social Security and the Veterans Administration**
- Take emotional and physical care of yourself**

Contact an attorney — Settling an estate can be a complex matter for legal and tax reasons, especially when no will has been written. It is in your best interests to have legal representation.

Attorney's name: _____

File an insurance claim — If your loved one was killed in an accident, whether on the road or at work, you may have coverage to pay for expenses related to medical care and vehicle damage.

Agent's name: _____

Request a police report — If the death required a report to be filed by the authorities, the family should retain a copy.

Police report number: _____

Other notes

OUR CHAPLAINS ARE HERE FOR YOU

It is important for you to identify and understand normal and common reactions to tragedy and loss.

Our chaplains can help as you begin to adjust to this enormous change in your life. We can get you connected with support groups and bereavement counselors.

Contact an Elkhart County Sheriff's Department chaplain by calling (574) 891-2300 during business hours or (574) 533-4151 on nights and weekends. We are here to help.



GRIEF REACTIONS

Physical

- Deep sighing
- Weakness and fatigue
- Rapid heartbeat
- Higher blood pressure
- Decrease in activity
- Muscular tension
- Vulnerability to illness
- Weight/appetite changes
- Neglect of self
- Higher sensory awareness

Emotional

- Numbness and shock
- Disbelief and denial
- Sadness or despair
- Guilt
- Yearning
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Feelings of being lost
- Anger or bitterness

Behavioral

- Blaming others
- Apathetic about activities
- Preoccupied
- Crying
- Seeking solitude
- Seeking forgiveness
- Detached or withdrawn
- Disorientation
- Inability to concentrate

TAKE TIME TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

This is a difficult time for your family. Do your best to help one another. The following valuable tips will assist you and your family as you remember your loved one and walk down this new path together.

Discipline yourself to eat regularly, even if you feel as if you cannot eat as much as usual.

Eat a balanced diet, avoiding sweets and fatty foods.

Drink 8-10 glasses of water per day and avoid alcoholic beverages — they are a depressant.

Avoid caffeine, hot or cold, as it is a short-term stimulant that will let you down.

Keep good posture.

Schedule 20-30 minutes of vigorous exercise daily. (Consult your physician about an appropriate routine based on your age and physical condition.)

Concentrate on deep breathing in the open air.

Try to catch a nap during the day.

Avoid solitary television watching.

Keep to your regular schedule and routine, and keep a balance between work, relationships and alone time.

AVOID BEING A VICTIM

Every day, survivors are vulnerable to those who prey on the suffering of others. The individuals most at-risk are those who are not accustomed to having to handle financial matters.

Never do business with anyone before checking their reputation.

Consult with the Better Business Bureau or check online before entering into any contract or agreement for services.

Be leery of offers that are too good to be true.

Some con artists promise to deliver goods or services for up-front payment. Or, another popular fraud is a “home inspection,” when a suspect will invent a problem needing immediate and costly repair.

Keep up with the latest schemes.

Make yourself aware of scams by listening to family, friends and neighbors or reading the newspaper. Also, the Elkhart County Sheriff’s Department puts the latest information on its Facebook page — so “like” the department today and get real-time updates.

Another good idea is to take up friends and neighbors when they offer to help. You can ask them to be a house-sitter during the times when you will be away during the visitation or memorial service or when you’re handling personal matters for the deceased.

CONTACT CREDITORS

On behalf of your loved one, and for the benefit of survivors, it is appropriate to let creditors know of the death by sending a letter.

“This letter is to inform you my (husband, wife, etc.) died on (month, day, year).

“I wish to inquire whether (his/her) loan or account was covered by a credit life insurance plan offered by your organization.

“Please send a list of documents and/or information necessary to file a claim. I will appreciate a response at your first convenience.

“Sincerely,” and finish with your signature and contact information.

PLANNING FOR THE FUNERAL

The funeral director needs certain information and items so your loved one can be remembered properly and survivors can receive all benefits entitled to them.

Social Security — Your funeral director will explain all benefits available, but you will need the number of the deceased to begin the claims process. The local SSA office is located at 231 Waterfall Drive, Elkhart, IN 46516, (574) 294-5667.

Veterans benefits — You will need discharge papers, military service number or identification card. The Elkhart County Veterans Service Office is located at 320 W. High St., Elkhart, IN 46516, (574) 523-2342. The number to reach the National Office of Veterans Affairs is (800) 827-1000.

Vital records — Personal information can be helpful in making arrangements. Such valuable information is the deceased’s date and place of birth, mother’s maiden name and place of birth, and father’s name and place of birth.

Insurance policies — If the deceased made pre-arrangements, purchased one or more burial policies, and/or had life insurance policies, you should collect the documents and take them to the meeting with the funeral director.

Photograph — The funeral director will need a photo for printed announcements and the newspaper obituary.

Newspaper notices — While the funeral director will contact newspapers, some families choose to write the obituary. Either way, it is important to gather information on survivors, hobbies or activities, memberships, church affiliation and noteworthy achievements.

Clothing — Most funeral homes will want to completely dress the body, including undergarments. The type of clothing is usually optional and often reflects the individual’s taste.