

FUNERAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

Action

Register the death

What you will need and why/decisions to be made

1. Take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, issued by the doctor.
2. Have enough money to cover the costs of Death Certificates. Order enough copies as you will need several (they are more expensive if ordered afterwards). Banks, building societies, etc. will all want an original copy so you need to think about the estate and decide how many is appropriate.
3. Have the following information:
 - date and place of death
 - name of deceased plus date and place of birth
 - maiden name of a deceased female
 - occupation of deceased (currently also name and occupation of a deceased female's husband)
 - permanent address of deceased
 - any pension or benefit details
 - NHS number if possible

Inform any other necessary authorities - bank, building societies, pension fund provider, Department of Social Security etc.

Take the original copy of the Death Certificate -proof will be needed.

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Make preliminary funeral plan

1. Burial or cremation?
2. Church, crematorium chapel or other venue?
3. Use or not of funeral director?
4. Finance: How will you pay? Have you access to funds? Might you require state assistance?
5. Check with bank- it will usually release money for a funeral from a frozen account providing there are funds available.
6. Suitable date and time for funeral. Be flexible if possible.
7. Crematoria usually allow a double booking (for a fee), which will give extra time and avoid rush.

Contact funeral

1. Take the green Certificate for Burial or Cremation director issued by the registrar. The funeral director will need this before being able to proceed.
2. Agree a convenient date and time for you, the funeral director and the minister.
3. Select a funeral package.
4. Discuss finance and means of payment. Have a budget in mind and don't be swayed from this -stay with what you can afford. Ask for the price list.
5. Any questions- write them down.
6. Confirm that the funeral director will make arrangements with the local church or crematorium.
7. Choose the coffin and handles.
8. Decide on transport and staff requirements, including coffin bearers.
9. View and select from the funeral director's range of floral tributes, if wished.

Contact family, friends, relatives, work colleagues and anyone else who might wish to come to the funeral

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1. Inform them of the date, time and location for the funeral.
2. Send directions and/or a map, if necessary, including to the reception.
3. Let them know about flowers/donations to a charity. (Ask family and friends for help with ringing round. It can be time-consuming and distressing having to repeat the news.)

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Choose any hymns, music and readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you have already made choices, check with the minister that they are suitable. 2. If necessary, ask the minister or organist for ideas. See also Part 3 of this book.
Plan service sheets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professionally printed or self-published? 2. Find suitable photographs, poems and quotations to include. 3. Decoration- simple or fancy?
The tribute/eulogy	<p data-bbox="379 528 580 551">Who will deliver it?</p> <p data-bbox="379 555 596 577">Topics to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childhood • family and locality • growing up • work and colleagues • clubs and societies • marriage or partnership/relationships • children • pets • what mattered to the deceased • how you felt about the deceased • how you will remember the deceased • anecdotes that characterise the deceased • any other things -idiosyncrasies, likes, dislikes etc
Flowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funeral director to provide? • If the church/crematorium has a flower arranging rota, enquire if some of the ladies might be prepared to see to the flowers for you. Let them know your preferences. Check costs. • Florists- what services do they provide? • Ask friends to do flowers. • Use flowers from your own garden and self- arrange. • Donations instead of flowers?

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Contact minister	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure he or she is happy with the choice of hymns and readings. 2. Have any other questions about the funeral ready.
Transport	How many might need transport to the venue? Check with the funeral director for more information.
Reception	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find out numbers likely to attend, if possible. 2. At home or in a room in a local pub or hotel? 3. If a hotel or pub, telephone to find out whether a suitable sized room is available and what kind of food they can lay on at relatively short notice, plus a price per head. 4. If at home, choose food that can be frozen if left over. Buy alcohol but make sure soft drinks and tea and coffee are also available. (Remember that some supermarkets offer sale or return on alcohol.) 5. If at home, will you need to hire or borrow glasses, cups and saucers, cutlery etc? (Some supermarkets and offlicences also loan glasses.)
Book of remembrance	A sort of visitor's book for the day. Ask that people note their addresses as well so you can drop them a brief note at a later date should you feel up to it.
Camera and film	You might want to take a few photographs of the flowers etc.

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Clothes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What will you and the family wear? 2. Will you need to shop? You may have to factor in a trip so allow time for that.
Thank you letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might like to write to the hospital, funeral director, minister or anyone else who helped, either during a last illness or with the funeral itself. • It is usual to write to thank those who sent floral tributes.

Regimental Business

Provision of a Royal Marines Bugler

Whenever possible, and if requested, we try to obtain the services of a Royal Marines Bugler to be in attendance at the Funeral or Thanksgiving Service for all deceased RM Veterans. Whether a Bugler can be in attendance is highly dependant on the availability of personnel. The RM Bands have an extremely busy operational and ceremonial programme and occasionally it is not possible to have an actual Bugler present. Ex service personnel may be entitled to a bugler at public expense. All requests are subject to availability and must be approved by the Royal Marines Band Service Tasking Authority.

On the comparatively rare occasions that we cannot supply a Bugler, CD's with the appropriate bugle calls (Last Post & Reveille) can be supplied.

The contact for booking RM Buglers is: Band Sgt Phil Hobby, whose appointment is "The Assistant Engagements Co-ordinator", his contact details are:

Telephone: 02392547553

Email address: navyrmband-hqbsrmaengcoord@mod.uk

Address: HQ Band Service Royal Marines, Walcheren Building, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8ER

The information he will require is:

- Information on the deceased, such as name, length of service.
- Details on the Point of Contact: Rank or Title, Initial & Surname, Relationship to the Deceased, all telephone & email contact details
- Funeral Details: Date & Time of the Service, Requirement (RM Bugler), Location of the Service (include Post Code) Name & telephone number of the Officiating Chaplain (if being used) and the Funeral Director, Any other details (where is the Bugler going to get changed?, the Vestry, an office in the Crematorium etc)

RMA Branch Attendance

We always attempt to have RM Branch attendance at the passing of one of our Comrades. Attendance can consist of a Branch RMA Standard Bearer and/or Branch Members. The established custom and practice is that they will attend the service wearing blazers or suits, medals and their berets. If the family are having a 'themed' funeral for the deceased with a different form of dress (a 'Western' or 'Hells Angel' theme perhaps), it may be prudent to inform the RMA Branch Secretary.

The contact details of the RMA Branch Secretaries situated around the country are to be easily found on the RMA Website. The Branch Secretaries are your first point of call. However, in case of doubt you can also contact RMA Central Office on 02392651519 and the Staff will answer you location queries.

Flag Etiquette & Dressing the Coffin/Casket

The question of which Flag can I use to drape the Veterans coffin?

This question is simply answered, for all Veterans, irrespective of cap badge or cap tally, the 'Union Flag' is the only flag that should be used. The majority of Funeral Directors have a Union Flag available that has an elasticated skirt and can fit of the majority of coffins/casket's. Many RM Veterans wish to have their 'Green Beret or White Cap atop the coffin, these items plus their medals and perhaps their white service belt are all perfectly acceptable military accoutrements to adorn the coffin. If you wish to place items on the coffin lid, it worth discussing your wishes with your Funeral Director prior to the Service. A discreet stitch or two, can avert a beret or cap flying off the coffin lid on a windy day. The Veterans hard earned medals will look far better placed on a 'presentation cushion'. Addressing these small but important points well in advance will make a stressful day less stressful.

Regimental Advice and Assistance

Organising or having involvement in a funeral with Regimental input can, on occasions, seem rather confusing. We are here to provide help and assistance so please do not feel inhibited in calling us. There is no such thing as a 'silly question' and the issue that is troubling you can probably be easily resolved.

If you need assistance on any funeral related question, please call Cameron March at RMA Central Office on his direct line: 02392 547213

IN THE ROYAL MARINE FAMILY, EVERY VETERAN IS UNIQUE