

# Questions?

Having a loved one pass away is an emotional time for family and friends so, if needed, we are here to help (see 'Contact Us' below). You can also reach the following people in the communities to find out what to do or who to contact:

- **Aklavik, NT:**
  - DGO/Band Office (867) 978-2340
  - Shandell McLeod, GSO (867) 952-2285
  - Community Social Worker (867) 978-2516
- **Fort McPherson, NT:**
  - DGO Office (867) 952-2330
  - Band Office (867) 952-2006
  - Mary Rose Tetlich, GSO (867) 952-2060
  - Community Social Worker (867) 952-2250 Ext. 1008
- **Inuvik, NT:**
  - DGO Office (867) 777-6650
  - Band Office (867) 777-5868
- **Tsiigehtchic, NT:**
  - DGO Office (867) 953-3011
  - Band Office (867) 953-3201
  - Maureen Cardinal-Clark, GSO (867) 953-3726
  - Community Wellness Worker (867) 953-3041

## Contact Us

Diane Baxter  
Gwich'in Tribal Council  
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## Bereavement Brochure



## What You Need to Know When Someone Passes Away

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# Notifications

1

## EMPLOYER

Notify the deceased person's employer and ask for information about benefits and any outstanding paychecks that may be due. Also inquire about life insurance policy. You will need the policy numbers to make claims or cancel any Policies the deceased had.

2

## SERVICE CANADA

Inform Service Canada to cancel old age pension and other payments. More information can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/benefits/family/death.html>

3

## BANK/CREDIT CARD ACCOUNTS

Advise the bank and credit cards companies of the deceased person's death. CIBC-Inuvik: 777-4539.

4

## OTHER AGENCIES

Contact and return the following identification to applicable organization:

- driver's license, status card, passport, social insurance number, health care card

**All of the above will require a death certificate.**

# Other Tasks

## Immediate tasks:

- **Wash and dress the body.** Have an outfit ready and prepare your loved one for viewing as soon as possible (preferably before rigor mortis sets in) as people will stop by to say their goodbyes. *Note: Diane Baxter & Charlotte Kay have often helped families in this area.*
- **Assign Someone as the Family Coordinator.** This person will be the main spokesperson for the family and is responsible for any media announcements, social media posts or completing of the required applications.
- **Make announcements of where the body can be viewed:** If at the morgue, you need to contact the funeral director in Inuvik to set a time (fee required). In the communities, the body can be kept in the home or in the community morgue.

## Getting ready for visitors:

- **Food & Beverages:** In most of our GSA communities, when a loved one passes, you will be receiving visitors. Make sure to always have coffee, tea, water or juice on hand for your visitors. It doesn't hurt to assign someone to prepare food for potential visitors (i.e. soup & sandwiches are quick and easy and keeps you busy and occupied). Some of the organizations may drop off food, coffee, tea, etc. for your visitors as well.
- **Notebook/Guestbook:** have a notebook or guestbook on hand in case people start dropping off donations of food, money, etc. This will help in keeping track so you can send out thank you cards after things settle down.

## Things to take care of on behalf of the deceased:

- **Provide care for pets/plants.** Make sure pets have caretakers until a permanent plan is made for them and the plants are watered.
- **Forward mail.** Go to the post office and forward mail to a family member or the executor of the estate. This way, you will find out what subscriptions, creditors or other accounts will need to be cancelled.

# What you need to do immediately after someone dies



## Get a Legal Pronouncement of Death

If your loved one dies in the hospital, the medical staff will get you to complete a *Registration of Death*.

But, if your loved one dies at home under family/home care/nurse's care, the nurse can declare the loved one's death. If they are not on site, contact them immediately and take note of the time of death so they can declare the time of death.



## Tell family and friends.

Once the loved one is declared deceased (or while waiting for nurse/physician to arrive), start contacting family members, close friends of the deceased and/or clergy to advise them of your loved one's death. Please remind them **NOT TO POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK)** as you have someone designated to post on Facebook once everyone has been informed.



## Find out about funeral/burial plans.

The family needs to discuss what the funeral/burial plans are. You need to discuss this with your loved one before their death and, if not, the family needs to decide immediately what to do i.e. burial or cremation. *Check the will for instructions on this as well.*



# Making Funeral Arrangements

## Buying a Casket/Urn

For the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA), the name of the funeral home is Inuvik Funeral Services. To contact them you call:

Mike Carruthers (867) 777-4018

Services they provide can be found on their website at:

<https://www.inuvikfuneralservices.com/>



You can go through Health & Social Services to assist with purchasing a casket by going through your community social worker (numbers on back page) or contact Inuvik directly at:

Carlos Vique, Regional Adult Case Manager (867) 678-8077

## Getting a local contractor to build a casket/urn/cross

Families usually reach out to someone they know but the following people have made caskets, urns and/or crosses in the past:

- **Aklavik:** Gil Kogiak & Robert Semple
- **Fort McPherson:** Phillip Kay, Raymond Neyando & Peter James Vittrekwa
- **Inuvik:** Donovan Arey, Robert C. McLeod, Vern McLeod, Ben Mitchell, & Richard Ross
- **Tsiigehtchic:** Peter Clark, Lawrence Francis, Ryan Mitchell & Richard Stewart

Most of these companies or people will charge a nominal fee for their services, or get you to purchase the materials, so be prepared to pay for their services.

## Get help with the celebration of life service.

Assign friends or family to do the various tasks associated with a funeral, such as:

- **Fundraising:** Do a donation program, either through the local radio station in your community or do an on-line fundraiser through Facebook:
  - **Aklavik, NT:**
    - CHAK 106.9 (867) 978-2244
  - **Fort McPherson, NT:**
    - CBQM 99.9 (867) 952-2371
  - **Tsiigehtchic, NT:**
    - 99.9 (867) 953-3414
- **Feast:** Organize and do the shopping for the feast and have a list of cooks and drivers for delivery and pick up of food;
- **Plan the Funeral** (date and time to be decided with **family** and **clergy - DO NOT FORGET to include clergy when planning the funeral**) and this person must:
  - Secure a location (church, gym, outdoors, etc.) and fill out the COVID forms (if being held indoors); obtain a burial permit (if being buried in Inuvik).
  - Find someone to do the Pamphlet for the service (Anita Koe, Diane Koe, Diane Baxter are some people who have done pamphlets).
    - *Names of Officiants, Pallbearers, Cross Carrier, Singers and Readers (for the gospels, psalms, and eulogy) will be required by the person doing the pamphlet.*
  - Find someone to do a video of the deceased (optional). May need someone to sing or play gospel music during the viewing as well;
  - Find someone to arrange for grave diggers and all that is required for the digging of the grave [tools, food, coffee, tea, water, shelter (winter-cold, summer-heat), etc.].