

P is for PROCESS, POWER and PREPARATION

Knowing who to call is the first step when someone dies. In this blog, I'm going to let you know what to do, who to call and what happens next. Understanding the process will help you make informed decisions about your loved one's care, and will let you know what you should expect from your funeral provider.

Don't be taken advantage of

When someone dies, the people left behind can be in a state of shock, grief and a general sense of overwhelm can cocoon them from the world around. So very often, whether intended or not, people are misled, misinformed, and taken advantage of. The best way to combat this is to have open conversations about death, the processes around death, and most importantly, being prepared for death.

The importance of choice

Every time someone chooses MyRest, I am reminded of why I founded this company – to provide guidance, respect and true choice when it matters most. While everyone's situation will be so very different, I can appreciate how a family may feel during a time just after a death. I want those families to know that I will be ready to support them in any way I can, and give them space where it's needed.

Breaking down the steps after someone dies

My goal for you, whether using MyRest or not, everything runs smoothly. While the article below refers to a Funeral Service Provider (FSP), please remember that this is your person and in Queensland there is no requirement to use a FSP for any part of the funerary process. [Check out our FAQs to learn about this](https://myrest.com.au/faqs/)¹.

HANDY HINT: Download a copy of the [Personal Details Form](https://myrest.com.au/personal-details-form/) ² from our website. Having this filled-in form is critical when the time comes. Whether you use MyRest, another FSP or handle the process yourself, this information is important to have ready to process the official Death

¹ <https://myrest.com.au/faqs/>

² <https://myrest.com.au/personal-details-form/>

Stage 1. If your person dies at home, skip to Stage 3. If your person dies at hospital or an aged care facility, there is no need rush and call anyone - you have time.

Do not allow anyone to hurry you or to make decisions right now.

If they die in an aged care facility that doesn't have a mortuary (most don't), you have time to have a cup of tea and sit with your person for a couple of hours before starting to call around. Air Conditioning is more than enough at this stage.

Stage 2. A hospital will require the person making collection at the hospital to provide them with an Authority to Release (ATR) from the Next of Kin. The ATR is a way of the hospital transferring their responsibility for your person to either a funeral service provider (FSP) or mortuary transfer service. You can do this at any time - click here > [Authority to Release](https://myrest.com.au/authority-to-release/)³. Aged care and hospice facilities vary in their processes so it may be best to find out in advance if planning a DIY funeral.

A doctor at the hospital will (and must within 48 hrs) provide a Form 9 - Cause of Death Certificate. The hospital will also not let a body leave without one. Go to Stage 4.

Stage 3. If your person dies at home, the circumstances leading up to the death will dictate what happens next. When a person is palliating (a terminal diagnosis and receiving only pain management) and/or local medical professionals are aware of the persons condition, the death should not be treated as an emergency. While in most cases, an ambulance is called, remember that;

- An ambulance is not required
- There is no immediate rush
- It can wait till morning to call your palliative nurse, GP, VAD Doctor or 000

When an ambulance is called, you can specify that the death is expected and there is no need for lights and sirens.

³ <https://myrest.com.au/authority-to-release/>

For all other deaths at home, a call to 000 *is* the first Stage. Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), and often Police, will attend and provide a Life Extinct Form. The QAS examination will determine whether the death is reportable to the Coroner. Reportable deaths are those where;

- the identity of the person is unknown
- the death was violent or unnatural (eg. heart attack/vehicle accident)
- the death happened in suspicious circumstances
- the death was health care related
- cause of death (Form 9) is unlikely to be issued within 48 hours
- the death occurred in custody
- the death occurred in care
- the death occurred during or due to police operations

If QAS does not find the death to be reportable then they will usually advise that the Funeral Service Provider is called. Even if you are using such a service, there is no time frame set under Queensland law and you should not be pressured to do so immediately unless the situation with your person is unmanageable.

If your person is located in an awkward position (eg. the floor, outside etc...) ask QAS to assist in getting them to a location or position that suits you. While your person may be deceased, they should still be afforded the respect and dignity everyone deserves.

NB. Ensure the original Life Extinct Form stays with your person. Do not let QAS leave with the original form as it is required to transport your person until a Form 9 - Cause of Death Certificate is provided by a doctor.

If QAS finds the death to be reportable to the Coroner, skip to Stage 5.

Stage 4. If engaging a FSP, the next Stage is to contact them and arrange collection of your person or how they can help keep your person at home a little longer if you choose.

Stage 5. The FSP, or Government Contracted Undertaker (GCU) for reportable deaths, will arrive to collect your person. If the death was not a reportable one and has been collected by your FSP, skip to Stage 8.

Stage 6. Your person will be taken to the Coroner (usually in Brisbane or Southport). Once the Coroner has made their findings, the GCU will usually return your person to the nearest hospital to where they died. Sometimes they

will be returned to a larger hospital due to capacity constraints⁴. This process may take up to two or three weeks.

Stage 7. Your FSP will need to make application to the Coroner (REQUEST FOR FORM 14 - ORDER FOR RELEASE OF BODY FOR BURIAL (INCLUDING CREMATION)). The FSP must provide the name of the person who engaged their services and the relationship to the deceased. This must match the information with the Coroner.

If your person is to be cremated, the FSP will also provide to the Coroner, Form 1 - Application for Permission to Cremate and the Coroner will provide them with Form 3 - Permission to Cremate.

Stage 8. Your person will be taken into care by your FSP. Between Stage 4 and now, the FSP will have organised a Form 9 - Cause of Death Certificate from either your person's GP or a doctor at the hospital. If burial has been chosen, skip to Stage 10.

DIY TIP: It would be your responsibility to follow up with your person's GP to ensure the Form 9 - Cause of Death Certificate is produced and made available to you.

Stage 9. Your FSP will engage an independent doctor with a Form 1 - Application for Permission to Cremate. The independent doctor will visit the Funeral Service Provider's mortuary and examine the deceased body to ensure there is no cremation risk (eg. Batteries inside cardiac pacemakers or spinal stimulators pose an explosion risk at the crematorium). Once satisfied and/or any risks removed from the body, a Form 4 - Permission to Cremate (INDEPENDENT DOCTOR) will be provided. There is a fee associated with this service that is paid for by the FSP and passed on via the final invoice, whether listed or included in their professional fees.

DIY TIP: You would be responsible for arranging a doctor to do this for you. If you are in the Southern Downs region, and needed this service, get in touch.

Stage 10. Whether a funeral has been organised in advance or not, now is the time the FSP will book the cemetery/crematorium. This is usually called an Application for Burial, Order for Cremation or something similar.

⁴ The Coroner can make changes to their procedures at any time. The information here is based on our experience Jan 2025.

A reminder now to ensure that the Personal Details Form is completed. This information can be lodged once your person has been buried or cremated and any delay in this information being provided to the FSP (or BDM directly if handling yourself), will result in a delay in processing the official Death Certificate from BDM.

Stage 11. On the day of burial/cremation, your person is transported to the facility where the burial/cremation takes place according to the funeral arrangements. If your person is to be buried, skip to Stage 13.

Stage 12. Anywhere from around 3 days onward, your ashes may be collected or returned. Collection can usually happen from around 3 business days and the name of the person collecting the ashes must be named in the Cremation Application (or the FSP can provide another name to the crematorium if necessary). The timeframe for returning ashes will depend on how they are returned. Most FSP will offer a postage service at a reasonable rate.

Stage 13. Anywhere from 2-4 weeks, the official Death Certificate should arrive. At MyRest we usually have this document sent directly to the applicant (most likely you, reading this article). Some FSP will have it sent to them where you will collect it.

Stage 14. Here at MyRest, I will check in with our client's family to see that they have received the official Death Certificate. As a general rule (every situation is different), it is my belief that while providing contacts to client's family - such as that of grief specialists - it is not my place to keep checking in. I am always available to anyone (whether they have used MyRest or not) and always happy to talk and provide information. That said, a call from us could be triggering for some people.

Summing up

While all this information may seem a little clinical, MyRest's goal is to give you all the information you need to make decisions that are right for you. Understanding the process gives you knowledge and empowers you to ensure you are treated fairly, ethically, and lawfully.

If you do engage MyRest, please know that I, Ulick Baumann (and any member of my small but mighty team), will treat your person with care and dignity.

Here is a review of the forms you may encounter. You can find most of them under the RESOURCES tab in the section [FORMS](#) ⁵.

- Form 1 - APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CREMATE
- Form 3 - PERMISSION TO CREMATE (CORONER)
- Form 4 - PERMISSION TO CREMATE (INDEPENDENT DOCTOR)
- Form 8 - Death registration application
- Form 9 - CAUSE OF DEATH CERTIFICATE
- (REQUEST FOR FORM 14 - ORDER FOR RELEASE OF BODY FOR BURIAL (INCLUDING CREMATION))
- Form 14 - ORDER FOR RELEASE OF BODY FOR BURIAL (INCLUDING CREMATION)

⁵ <https://myrest.com.au/forms/>

Form 1
Queensland
Cremations Act 2003
(Section 6(1))
APPLICATION FOR A PERMISSION TO CREMATE

Please print all information on this form.

To:

- ☐ Coroner
☐ Independent Doctor

(The application has to be to a coroner if an autopsy was or is being conducted under the Coroners Act 1958 or the Coroners Act 2003. Otherwise the application is to be made to an independent doctor – section 5 of the Cremations Act 2003.)

I, _____,
(print name in full)

whose address for service to be included on the Permission to Cremate is:

(print address for service in full)

Telephone No: _____

apply for a permission to cremate the human remains of:

Name of deceased person: _____

Usual or last known address of deceased person *(if known)*: _____

Date and place of death of deceased person *(if known)*: _____

Age of deceased person: *(if known)*: _____ Date of birth of deceased person *(if known)*: _____

1. (Complete either A or B - use B only if an agent)

A. (Tick one box only)

- I am a: ☐ spouse
☐ child who is at least 18 years
☐ parent
☐ brother who is at least 18 years
☐ sister who is at least 18 years
☐ appropriate person according to the tradition or custom of the community to which the deceased person belonged *(only applies if the deceased was an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)*
☐ personal representative *(under section 36 of the Acts Interpretation Act 1954 a personal representative is the deceased person's executor or administrator)*

of the deceased person.

- ☐ another adult person who is making the application because:

(print here reason why none of the persons referred to above have made the application, eg, none of the persons referred to above are available.)

B. I am an agent of a person referred to in A namely:

(print particular person referred to in A, eg, spouse/sister who is at least 18 years)

2. (Tick one box only)

- ☐ The deceased person left/did not leave (*delete whichever does not apply*) signed instructions that his/her (*delete whichever does not apply*) human remains be cremated.
- ☐ I do not know whether the deceased person left instructions that his/her (*delete whichever does not apply*) human remains be cremated.

Note: If the deceased person left signed written instructions that his/her human remains be cremated then:

- *if the personal representative is arranging the disposal of the human remains he/she must ensure an application for a permission to cremate is made (section 7(2) of the Cremations Act 2003); and*
- *there is no obligation to have regard to any objections to the cremation (section 8(1) of the Cremations Act 2003).*

3. (Tick one box only)

- ☐ To the best of my knowledge I am not aware that any of the following people have any objection to the cremation of the human remains of the deceased person: spouse, adult child, parent or personal representative.
- ☐ The deceased person's spouse, adult child, parent or personal representative (*delete whichever does not apply*) has objected to the cremation of the human remains of the deceased person.

Note:

*The Permission to Cremate cannot be issued if there is an objection from one of the persons referred to (section 8(2) of the Cremations Act 2003) **unless** the deceased person left signed written instructions that his/ her human remains be cremated (section 8(1) of the Cremations Act 2003).*

4. (Tick one box only)

- ☐ The deceased person's human remains contain a cremation risk (*please specify, eg, cardiac pacemaker*):

-
- ☐ The deceased person's human remains do not contain a cremation risk.

- ☐ I do not know whether the deceased person's human remains contain a cremation risk.

Note: Human remains pose a cremation risk if the remains contain something that, if cremated, might expose someone to the risk of death, injury or illness (for example, a cardiac pacemaker or radioactive implant: section 6(7) of the Cremations Act 2003).

5. (Complete only where the application is to an independent doctor. Tick one box only.)

The following documents accompany this application to an independent doctor:

- ☐ copy of cause of death certificate issued for the deceased person; and a cremation risk certificate for the deceased person
*(Note: a cremation risk certificate is not necessary if the cause of death certificate is not a Queensland cause of death certificate **and** a cremation risk certificate has not been issued for the deceased person – section 6(4) and (5) of the Cremations Act 2003.)*
- ☐ a certificate that authorises the release of the body given by a coroner, or person holding a position equivalent to a coroner, at the place where the death happened.

Name, address and telephone number of person nominated to be sent the permission to cremate (Section 6(9) of the Cremations Act 2003). (Complete only if this person is different from the applicant.):

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Signature of person making the application: _____

Date of application: _____

Note:

1. The address for service is the address which will be used by the crematorium to give notice if it decides to bury any unclaimed ashes after one year: section 11 of the Cremations Act 2003.
2. The application can be sent to the coroner or independent doctor by fax or other electronic means: section 6(3) of the Cremations Act 2003.
3. The permission to cremate can be sent to the applicant, or person nominated by the applicant, by fax or other electronic means: section 6(9) of the Cremations Act 2003.
4. Section 16 of the Cremations Act 2003 makes it an offence to give false or misleading information in a material particular to a coroner or independent doctor. The maximum penalty that can be imposed is 80 penalty units (\$6000).

Form 4
Queensland
Cremations Act 2003
(Sections 5 and 6)
PERMISSION TO CREMATE (INDEPENDENT DOCTOR)

Please print all information on this form.

I, _____,
(print name of independent doctor)

of, _____
(print business address of independent doctor)

Telephone number: _____

state: _____

1. I have received an application from: _____
(print applicant's name)

whose address for service is: _____

(print address for service as stated in the Application for Permission to Cremate)

to cremate the human remains of:

Name of deceased person: _____

Usual or last known address of deceased person: _____

Date and place of death of deceased person: (if known) _____

Age of deceased person: (if known) _____ Date of birth of deceased person: (if known) _____

2. The application was accompanied by: **(Tick appropriate boxes)**

☐ a copy of cause of death certificate issued for the deceased person; and

☐ a cremation risk certificate for the deceased person

(Note: a cremation risk certificate is not necessary if the cause of death certificate is not a Queensland cause of death certificate and a cremation risk certificate has not been issued for the deceased person – section 6(4) and (5) of the Cremations Act 2003.)

or

☐ a certificate that authorises the release of the body given by a coroner, or person holding a position equivalent to a coroner, at the place where the death happened.

3. I have examined the human remains and have made any necessary inquiries and am reasonably satisfied that:

- the human remains do not pose a cremation risk; and
- the deceased person's death is not a reportable death under the *Coroners Act 2003*.

Note: Human remains pose a cremation risk if the remains contain something that, if cremated, might expose someone to the risk of death, injury or illness (for example, a cardiac pacemaker or radioactive implant: section 6(7) of the Cremations Act 2003).

4. To the best of my knowledge I am not aware of any objection by a spouse, adult child, parent or personal representative of the deceased person which prevents me from issuing a Permission to Cremate the human remains.

*Note: The Permission to Cremate cannot be issued if there is an objection from one of the persons referred to (section 8(2) of the Cremations Act 2003) **unless** the deceased person left signed written instructions that his/ her human remains be cremated (section 8(1) of the Cremations Act 2003).*

5. I give permission for the human remains to be cremated.

Signature of independent doctor issuing the Permission to Cremate: _____

Date of issue of the Permission to Cremate: _____

Note:

1. An independent doctor is a medical practitioner under the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001, schedule 3, that is, a person registered under the Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 who did not sign:

• the cause of death certificate; or

• the cremation risk certificate.

It does not include a person who, in another State or country, is equivalent to a doctor: schedule of the Cremations Act 2003.

2. Section 9 of the Cremations act 2003 prohibits a person from issuing a permission to cremate where the person reasonably suspects that he/ she or his/ her spouse may receive a benefit because of a person's death.
3. The permission to cremate can be sent to the applicant, or person nominated by the applicant on the application, by fax or other electronic means: section 6(9) of the Cremations Act 2003.