



When A *Loved One* Passes Away...

*Procedural Guide compiled by
Sikh Welfare Council
in consultation with
the managements of Gurdwaras
and other Sikh Institutions
in Singapore*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended to help members of the bereaved family understand the procedures to be observed to register the death, arrange for a dignified cremation of the deceased, handle the remains and conduct the prayers thereafter. It is meant to be a guide of best practices.

The Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) is organized to assist family members in their time of need. It will observe the procedures discussed herein to support family members in giving a dignified farewell to the loved ones.

It may be contacted through its 24 hour hotline 62999234 for all such assistance.

2. REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Scenario A: If Death occurs in a Hospital

(Call SIWEC @ 6299 9234 for any assistance)

Step 1 : Obtain Certificate of Cause of Death (CCOD)

If the cause of death is known and is natural, a doctor in the hospital will prepare the CCOD. The family can then obtain the CCOD from the ward nurse by producing the identity card of the deceased.

If the doctor is unable to determine the cause of death, or a death has been the result of an unnatural event (e.g. surgical proceedings or a fall prior to admission), the doctor is required under the law to refer the case to the Police/Coroner.

In such cases, the body will be sent to the Center of Forensic Medicine (CFM) Mortuary (located at Block 9, Singapore General Hospital) in a Police Hearse. The hospital will arrange for this and the family will be told by the police to go down to the CFM Mortuary (usually the next day).

What to bring to CFM:

- All medical documents relating to the deceased
- All medicine consumed by the deceased

- Identification papers of the deceased and informant e.g. NRIC/Passport/Certificate of Registration of Birth/FIN card

At the CFM Mortuary

- The Police investigator will arrange for the family to view and identify the deceased's body in the presence of the Coroner
- The Coroner will review the case and determine if an autopsy is required
- The family will be informed of the Coroner's decision and the time to claim the body for the cremation.
- If no autopsy is required, the CCOD will be issued by the coroner/doctor and the body may be claimed by the family.

If the investigation reveals that the death was unnatural and an autopsy is required, the family will be required to assist. Once the investigation is completed, the coroner/doctor will issue the CCOD and the body may be claimed by the family. If for any reason the police are not satisfied with the cause of the death, a coroner's enquiry may be subsequently conducted.

Step 2 : Register the Death

At the registration centre, the family will state that the body will be cremated.

If the body is in a government restructured hospital, the registration can be done at the hospital (consult the ward nurse where to do the registration). The CCOD will have to be produced to register the death.

If the body is at a private hospital, the family will have to register the death at

- Any Police Divisional Headquarters, Neighbourhood Police Centre, Neighbourhood Police Post
(refer to Appendix 5)

Or

- The Registry of Births & Deaths,
3rd floor, ICA Building, 10 Kallang Road. Tel: 6391 6100
Working hours: 8 am - 5 pm (Mon - Fri),
8 am - 1 pm (Sat)

If the body is referred to the CFM Mortuary, the death will be registered at CFM Mortuary.

What to bring to register a death:

- CCOD
- Identification papers of deceased and informant
e.g. NRIC/Passport/ Certificate of Registration of Birth/ FIN card.

A death certificate is required for all proceedings related to the cremation, including placement of obituaries in the newspapers.

Step 3 : Engage a Cremation Director

(This may be done concurrently with Step 2).

After the Certificate of Death is obtained, the family may engage a cremation director who will

- Collect the body from the hospital mortuary
- Send the body for embalming (if required), and
- Deliver the body to the location of the wake
- Transport the body for cremation.

Scenario B: If the death occurs at home

(Call SIWEC @ 62999234 for any assistance)

Step 1 : Obtain Certificate of Cause of Death (CCOD)

Contact your family doctor, who has been attending to the deceased and he will be able to issue you the CCOD on the spot. If he is unable to certify the death, call the Police for the body to be sent to Center of Forensic Medicine (CFM) in a Police Hearse.

If you do not have a family doctor, contact the Police who will come to your house. The Police will contact the Forensic Death Investigator (FDI). The FDI will come to your house to certify the cause of death and issue the CCOD. If the death cannot be certified, the Police will arrange for the body to be sent to the CFM Mortuary, and the family will be told to proceed there the next day.

At the CFM Mortuary

Step 1 : Obtain Certificate of Cause of Death (CCOD)

If the cause of death is known and is natural, a doctor in the hospital will prepare the CCOD. The family can then obtain the CCOD from the ward nurse by producing the identity card of the deceased. If the doctor is unable to determine the cause of death, or a death has been the result of an unnatural event (e.g. surgical proceedings or a fall prior to admission), the doctor is required under the law to refer the case to the Police/Coroner. The Coroner will review the case and determine if an autopsy is required. If no autopsy is required the Coroner/Doctor will issue the CCOD and the body may be claimed by the family.

If an autopsy is required, the family will be required to assist in the investigation. In this case the CCOD will be issued and body may be released only after the investigation. If for any reason, the police are not satisfied with the cause of death, a coroner's enquiry may be subsequently conducted.

Step 2 : Register the Death

At the Registration Centre, the family will state that the body will be cremated.

What to bring to register a death:

- Certificate of Cause of Death

- Identification papers of deceased and informant e.g. NRIC/Passport/Certificate of Registration of Birth/FIN card.
- A death certificate is required for all proceedings relating to the funeral including the placement of obituaries in the newspapers.

Step 3 : Engage a Cremation Director

(This may be done concurrently with step 2).

After the Certificate of Death is obtained, the family may engage a cremation director who will

- Collect the body from the hospital mortuary
- Send the body for embalming (if required), and
- Deliver the body to the location of the wake
- Transport the body for cremation.

3. PREPARATION FOR CREMATION

Collection of Body

The family may collect the body from the Hospital Mortuary upon producing the death certificate and decide if the funeral should be on same day or the following day.

Body can be kept in the Hospital Mortuary for a maximum of 3 days *(if the family is waiting for relatives from overseas)*.

Booking of Crematorium and Hearse

- Call Mandai Crematorium & book the time and hall for Cremation. (**Tel. No: 6554 5655**)
- A representative must go in person to the Mandai Crematorium to confirm the booking by **paying \$100 by NETS**. *(Must bring along original death certificate)*.
- **Call Central Sikh Temple** (2 Towner Road **Tel. no. 6299 3855**) to book the hearse and **pay \$100** to CST for hearse, if private arrangements have not been made for the purpose through a cremation director.
- Arrange for a driver of the hearse *(may be anyone known to family or volunteer arranged through SIWEC)*.

Purchase of Coffin

- A coffin can be purchased from any commercial parlour (If the family so wishes, they may avail of contractual arrangements made with Mr. Ang Chin Huat Funeral Services (mobile: 98623026; 88 Geylang Bahru #01-2724 or Western Casket at Blk 1004 Toa Payoh Industrial Park, Toa Payoh Lorong 8, #01-1345A, for a coffin of standard size at a price of \$260/-).
- The Hearse should be brought along to pick-up/ carry the coffin.

Booking of Buses

Buses may be booked from any rental company to transport guests to the crematorium to ply the route of temple-Mandai-temple or home-mandai-temple at a cost of \$75/-per sector per 44-seater bus.

Booking of Gurdwara

Family books the Gurdwara to be used for the prayer proceedings and requests the Gurdwara to post on the Notice Board the details of the deceased and on-coming prayer programmes.

Placing of an Obituary (optional)

A notice of death or an obituary may be placed in the local papers in memory of the deceased.

- A) Types of Newspapers
English: The Straits Times, The Sunday Times and Today
- B) Documents Required
1. Original Death Certificate
 2. Identity Card of person placing the notice
- C) Mode of payment
1. Credit Card
 2. NETS
 3. Cash (during office hours only)
- D) Location

The Straits Times and The Sunday Times

Singapore Press Holdings,
News Centre 1000 Toa Payoh North (S) 318994
Mon - Fri: 8.30 am to 5.30 pm
Sat: 8.30 am to 12.30 pm

Please call 1800-2899988 during office hours for more information

Today

20 Pickering Street, #03-00,
Pickering Operations Complex, (S) 048658
Mon – Fri: 9.00 am – 6.00 pm

Please call 1800-2527723 during office hours for more information

- E) Details to include in the obituary
(a simple guideline)
1. Photo of deceased
 2. Name of deceased and alias, if any
 3. Date of death (time optional)
 4. Names of family members (parents, spouse, children, adopted children, in-laws, grandchildren, siblings, nephews/nieces, uncles/aunts, cousins, godparents/godchildren etc.) If any family member is deceased, name should be within brackets with words deceased or late, e.g. (Mr. XYZ. Singh, deceased) or (Late ABC. Kaur)
 5. Location of wake
 6. Cremation details with the name of crematorium and time (start to end). If necessary, include a message such as 'no wreaths please' and indicate name of charity for any donations.
 7. Details of Prayers and Bhog (Location, Dates/Times).

Items to be procured

Please see Annex I specifying items to be purchased for the cremation proceedings and suggested locations.

4. CREMATION PROCEDURES

Washing of Body

- If death occurs in a hospital, the mortuary allocates a place to wash the body.
- If CCOD is issued at home, then washing of body may only be done at home or at the commercial parlor.
- Family members are encouraged to participate in the bathing process *(5 to 8 members are required)*
- The procedure is to remove all the clothes, bandages etc and then wash the body with water, using yoghurt to cleanse and then immediately wash with water again applying shower cream/ soap on the whole body. *(During this process the centre part of the body should remain covered with a small towel).*
- The body and stretcher are then dried with a towel and dressed, starting with the Kachhehra, followed by the other clothes brought for the purpose. *(Used favorite clothes are acceptable. Shoes not required).*
- The washed body is then placed in the coffin.

Loading the coffin into the hearse.

While loading, the legs should go first in the hearse so that at off-loading time, the head would appear first.

Embalming of body

Embalming is required if the body is brought home (*or kept in the parlor*) and cremation is arranged the following day or later. Embalming may be done through the cremation director.

Viewing of body at Home/Funeral Parlor

- At the discretion of the deceased's family, the body may be brought home or to a commercial parlor for viewing (*wake*).
- In such instances, kirtan/prayer recordings are played continually whilst the body is lying in state. Sukhmani Sahib Paath may be recited (*optional*), followed by a short Ardaas before the coffin is loaded into the hearse and taken to the crematorium.

Offloading of body at crematorium

Upon reaching the crematorium, the coffin is off loaded from the hearse and taken to the cremation hall. Family members may decide either to carry the coffin on their shoulders or use the trolley provided by the Crematorium. If the body is to be carried on the shoulders, 8 to 10 pallbearers will be required. (*The handles of the coffin should not be used as they are not secure enough*).

Solemnity in Hall

A recording of Vairag Mai Bani Slok Mahla 9/Simran is played continually in the cremation hall.

Family Paying Respects

The coffin is placed on the podium of the hall to allow family members to first pay their respects. (*Placing of blankets, garlands and other personal items is discouraged*).

Sangat Offering Respects

The members of the congregation then pay their respects (*starting with the ladies*), by placing flowers on the deceased and offering their condolences to immediate family members, who may stand in line beside the coffin.

Eulogy

If the family wishes to have an eulogy, this may be done just before the Ardaas.

Ardaas

- Ardaas is recited, seeking permission from the Almighty to cremate the body.
- Family members gather around to pay their last respects before the announcements are made and the coffin is rolled in to the Cremation Chambers. (*Application of Ghee is discouraged*).

Announcements

Following the conclusion of the Ardaas, an announcement would be made to cover the following:

- Requesting family members, close relatives and friends to proceed to the viewing hall.
- For others to remain seated to await return of those from the viewing hall for reciting the Kirtan Sohila and Ardaas.
- Date/Time/Place of the Sehaj Paath/Akhand Paath and Bhog.
- Requesting all to proceed to the Gurdwara for a short prayer following the cremation.
- Transportation arrangements for departure to the Gurdwara.

At the Viewing Hall

- The congregation recites the Simran.
- Before the coffin is inserted into the cremator, Slok (Pawan Guru Pani Pita.....) is recited by the whole Sangat followed by Jaikara (Bolay So Nihal..... Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa.....
- Well wishers then return to the Cremation Hall for reciting the Kirtan Sohila followed by Ardaas, and then proceed to the Gurdwara.

At the Gurdwara

- At the Gurdwara, Vairag Mai Bani Kirtan and Alahniya da Paath are recited followed by relevant Bani and Ardaas.
- A simple meal of rice, daal and tea may be served as Langgar, following conclusion of prayers (*not mandatory*).

5. HANDLING OF REMAINS

Collection of Ashes

- Approximately 5 members of family and friends accompanied by the Giani Ji are to pick-up the ashes at the Mandai Crematorium the following morning.
- Ashes are to be placed in a guthi.
- Ardaas is recited following the collection before proceeding to the designated place to immerse the ashes in the sea (*currently at Changi Point*). If the ashes are to be immersed outside Singapore, the ashes may be brought home for safe keeping (*prior to departure abroad*) or kept in a rented burial niche in the columbarium. The relevant permit will have to be procured to transport the ashes outside the country.

Disposal of Ashes

- At Changi Point, a boat may be hired for \$50/-.
- Once the boat is in the open sea, Giani Ji recites the Ardaas – seeking permission to immerse the ashes.
- One of the family members disperses the ashes and Jaikara is recited by all. (*Family members are advised not to release personal artifacts of the departed into the sea*).

- The family members and Giani Ji then return to the Gurdwara or the home (if Paath is being conducted at home) and pay their respects to Sri Guru Granth Sahib jee (Mattha Tayk). Giani Ji then recites the Ardaas as a conclusion to the immersion proceedings.

A simple meal may be served to all following the conclusion of these proceedings.

6. PRAYERS AND BHOG

- The family members liaise with the Gurdwara regarding timing of the Akhand/Sehaj Paath Bhog and Antim Ardaas.
- If it is decided to do the Akhand Paath, then the Bhog would be held 48 hours after commencement of the Paath.
- If it is decided to have the Sehaj Paath, then the Bhog may be held anytime (*may be after one week, ten days or even longer*).
- The Akhand Paath/Sehaj Paath may also be done at home and the Bhog and Antim Ardaas at home or in the Gurdwara.
- A simple langgar is normally served upon conclusion of the prayers.

ANNEX 1 :

Items to be procured and suggested current locations

| | <u>Place Of Purchase/Item</u> | <u>Cost</u> |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 1. | <u>Chirag Din 6336 0475</u> Khafan Set (Hair Oil/Comb, Ghee, Agarbatti, Non-alcoholic perfume, Karha/Kangha), Shower Cream, Guthi Turban (for males) | About \$65 \$6 |
| | <i>Remarks</i> <i>Use of ghee is discouraged as it is not religiously required</i> <i>Personal favorite used (male/female) clothes can be provided by family and it is not necessary to use brand new clothes</i> | |
| 2. | <u>Jothi Flowers 6338 7008</u> 1 bag loose flowers/petals Yoghurt | \$10 \$5 |
| 3 | <u>Shop in Tekka Market</u> Towels 4 big & 2 small Small blanket 1 | \$19 \$40-45 |
| 4 | <u>For Ash Collection</u> (Procure items from any convenient location) Milk Pail (Bucket) Loose flowers | \$3 \$5 \$3 |

ANNEXE 2 : Assistance of SIWEC

SIWEC is ready to assist and follow through the procedures for family members and may be contacted at tel no. 6299 9234 (24 hrs hotline) and at its office at the Central Sikh Temple premises, 2, Towner Road, Singapore 327804.

The following table provides comparative cost information when assistance is provided by SIWEC against that of a private operator for some key items.

The figures are purely a guideline and SIWEC has no influence over these charges.

SIWEC

Private Operator

1. Transport of body from one location to another

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Assists to contact private operator | \$150 per trip |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|

2. Bathing Facility

| | |
|---|--|
| FREE (at all Government Hospital mortuaries) | The charges vary from parlour to parlour |
|---|--|

3. Embalming

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| May be arranged through private operator | Male - \$350 Female - \$500 |
|--|--------------------------------|

4. Coffin

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| \$260.00 (collect from Western Casket at Blk 4 Toa Payoh Ind. Park, Lor 8, #01-1345A, S.319056. Tel: 62538073) | \$300 upwards based on type etc. |
|---|----------------------------------|

5. Bus

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| \$150 per round trip | \$150 per round trip |
|----------------------|----------------------|

6. Cremation Fees @ Mandai

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| \$100 (pay by NETS) | \$100 (pay by Nets) |
|---------------------|---------------------|

7. Hearse Footnote (a)*

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| \$100.00 (payable to Central Sikh Temple) | \$180 (inclusive of fuel and driver) |
|---|--------------------------------------|

8. Extra Manpower

| | |
|------|---------------|
| N.A. | \$60 per hour |
|------|---------------|

9. Procurement of other items

| |
|--------------|
| see Annexe 1 |
|--------------|

***(a)** The new (current) Hearse is a White Toyota, 2 deck hearse carriage mounted (YM 676K) and was purchased with the assistance of the Sikh community and institutions. The lower deck (not visible from outside) is meant to carry the body from the mortuary to the bathing facility. It comes with a stretcher for carrying the body. The upper deck is for carrying the coffin after the bathing and the coffin can be viewed through the glass panels built around the sides of the carriage.

The Hearse is parked at the Central Sikh Temple and is available for use by the Sikh Community through the Sikh Welfare Council and/or Central Sikh Temple.

ANNEXE 3:
Death outside the country
(Call SIWEC @ 6299 9234 for assistance)

If the death occurs overseas, it should be registered with the relevant foreign authorities where the death has occurred.

1. Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents

The body of a Singapore Citizen/Permanent Resident may be brought back to Singapore for cremation. However, a Coffin (Import) Permit is required to import a body into Singapore. A cremation director should be able to assist you in the procedures.

Application of Coffin (Import) Permit

You may apply for a coffin permit anytime from the following offices:

- Port Health Office
4545 Jalan Bukit Merah
Singapore 159466
Tel: 6222 2585 Fax: 6222 8543

- Airport Health Office
Singapore Changi Airport
Tel: 6543 2515 Fax: 6543 1973

Documents required for the issuance of the coffin permit

- Death Certificate issued by the country where death occurred (copy of English translation is required if the death certificate is in ethnic languages), Cause of Death Certificate or a Statuary Declaration
- Sealing Certificate for the coffin
- Embalming Certificate where applicable
- Coffin Export Permit for the country exporting the body
- Air Waybill (Air Consignment Note) if by air

If the application is made by the cremation director, the Permit to Cremate will be granted provided the next-of-kin gives a letter of authorization for the cremation director to apply for the permit.

Note: Prior written approval has to be obtained from the National Environmental Agency, Environmental Health Department for the import of a body of a H1N1-infected Singapore Citizen.

Death Registration

The death will also have to be reported to Singapore's Registry of Births & Deaths, Citizen Centre, 3rd Storey, ICA Building personally by the next-of-kin of

the deceased. If the next-of-kin is unable to report the death personally at ICA Building, a letter of authorization will be required.

Documents Required

- Death certificate issued by the foreign authorities (*copy of English translation is required if the death certificate is in ethnic languages*)
- Coffin (Import/Export) permit
- Permit to Cremate
- Deceased's Singapore identity card, passport, Citizenship Certificate (if any), and
- Informant's identification documents

2. Foreign National

For Cremation

- Foreigners are allowed to be imported into Singapore for cremation. A Coffin (import) Permit is required to import a body into Singapore. A cremation director should be able to assist you in the procedures.
- A Permit to Cremate will also be issued with the Coffin (import) Permit. If the application is by the cremation director, the permit will be granted provided the next-of-kin gives a letter of authorization for the cremation director to apply for the permit.

**Annex 4:
Contact Details of Gurdwaras**

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Central Sikh Temple | 6299 3855 |
| Sri Guru Singh Sabha | 63376301 |
| Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha | 63266701 / 63485125 |
| Silat Road Sikh Temple | 62222208 |
| Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan | 67417207 |
| Khalsa Dharmak Sabha | 63380731 / 68970235 |
| Gurdwara Sahib Yishun | 67534607 |

**Annex 5:
Contact Details of Hospitals**

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Singapore General Hospital | 6222 3222 |
| Tan Tock Sang Hospital | 6256 6011 |
| Changi General Hospital | 6788 8833 |
| National University Hospital | 6779 5555 |
| Alexandra Hospital | 6472 2000 |
| Khoo Teck Puat Hospital | 6555 8000 |
| Institute of Mental Hospital | 6389 2000 |
| Mount Elizabeth Hospital | 6737 2666 |
| Raffles Hospital | 6311 1111 |
| Gleneagles Hospital | 6473 7222 |
| Thomson Medical Centre | 6250 2222 |
| Mount Alvernia Hospital | 6347 6688 |
| East Shore Hospital | 6735 5000 |

ANNEX 6 :
Contact details of Police Stations in various locations

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| EMERGENCY | 999 |
| Police Headquarters | 6353 0000 |
| Alexandra Neighbourhood | 1800 4739999 |
| Ang Mo Kio Neighbourhood | 1800 4849999 |
| Ayer Rajah Neighbourhood | 1800 5659999 |
| Bedok North Neighbourhood | 1800 2449999 |
| Bukit Merah East Neighbourhood | 1800 2369999 |
| Bukit Merah West Neighbourhood | 1800 3779999 |
| Buona Vista Neighbourhood | 1800 7779999 |
| Chai Chee Neighbourhood | 1800 4459999 |
| Changi Neighbourhood | 1800 5872999 |
| Clementi Neighbourhood | 1800 8729999 |
| Commonwealth Neighbourhood | 1800 4749999 |
| Dover Neighbourhood | 1800 7788999 |
| Eunos Neighbourhood | 1800 4439999 |
| Geylang Neighbourhood | 1800 8486999 |
| Hougang Neighbourhood | 1800 4890999 |
| Jurong East Neighbourhood | 1800 8999999 |
| Kallang Neighbourhood | 1800 2996999 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Kampong Glam Neighbourhood | 1800 2989999 |
| Kebun Baru Neighbourhood | 1800 4589999 |
| Kreta Ayer Neighbourhood | 1800 5359999 |
| MacPherson Neighbourhood | 1800 7449999 |
| Marine Parade Neighbourhood | 1800 4428999 |
| Marine Parade Neighbourhood | 1800 4409999 |
| Mountbatten Neighbourhood | 1800 3449999 |
| Pasir Ris Neighbourhood | 1800 5852999 |
| Pasis Panjang Neighbourhood | 1800 2759999 |
| Paya Lebar Neighbourhood | 1800 2899999 |
| Queenstown Neighbourhood | 1800 4719999 |
| Rochor Neighbourhood | 1800 2949999 |
| Sembawang Neighbourhood | 1800 5549999 |
| Serangoon Neighbourhood | 1800 4880999 |
| Siglap Neighbourhood | 1800 4489999 |
| Tampines Neighbourhood | 1800 5871999 |
| Tanah Merah Neighbourhood | 1800 4499999 |
| Tanjong Pagar Neighbourhood | 1800 2738999 |
| Ulu Pandan Neighbourhood | 1800 4669999 |
| Yishun North Neighbourhood | 1800 8529999 |

ਜੇਹਾ ਚੀਰੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥
ਘਲੇ ਆਵਹਿ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਸਦੇ ਉਠੀ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ ੧ ॥

AS HIS DECREE IS ISSUED,
SO IS HIS COMMAND OBEYED.
THOSE WHO ARE SENT, COME, O NANAK;
WHEN THEY ARE CALLED BACK,
THEY DEPART AND GO.

ਜੋ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਸੋ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਹੈ ਪਰੋ ਆਜੁ ਕੈ ਕਾਲਿ ॥

WHATEVER HAS BEEN CREATED
SHALL BE DESTROYED;
EVERYONE SHALL PERISH,
TODAY OR TOMORROW.