COOPERATIVE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

Someone has died: the first week

Only a few things need to happen right away. Everything else can wait until you are ready.

> Questions? Call CMS on **403-248-2044** or toll free **1-800-566-9959**, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10am to 3pm.

1. **Confirm the death.** In a hospital or care facility, staff will do this. At home and expected: call the attending nurse, physician, palliative care team or hospice contact. At home and unexpected: call 911.
2. **Organ and tissue donation, if it applies.** Tell the hospital or medical team straight away. This comes before other arrangements.
3. **Call your CMS funeral home** (numbers overleaf). Tell them they were a CMS member. No membership number is needed: the funeral director can look it up by name and address. Bring any written wishes, such as a Ducks in a Row booklet or a CMS guidance form.

   Before you agree to anything, ask for a full written quotation and make sure you understand what is included, what is required, what is optional, and what additional costs may apply.
4. **Secure the home, pets and property.** Lock the home, garage and vehicles; arrange care for pets; tell the landlord if there is one; call the police non-emergency line if the property needs extra attention.

In this pack

Page 3: What to Do When a Member Passes Away (4 pages).
Page 7: What Happens After Your Loved One Is Taken Into Care (3 pages).

The full Funeral Resource and Reference Guide (34 pages) is at coopmemorial.org, under Forms and Resources.

COOPERATIVE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

Your CMS funeral home

Call the one that serves the area where they lived. Tell them they were a CMS member.

AREA	FUNERAL HOME	PHONE
Calgary and area	**McInnis & Holloway Funeral Homes** Calgary, Cochrane, Airdrie and area Or text 403-256-9575, 24 hours a day	**403-243-8200** 24 hours a day
Edmonton and area	**Connelly-McKinley Funeral Homes** Edmonton and surrounding communities, from St. Albert to Leduc and Sherwood Park Family service: 780-590-0626	**780-422-2222**
	Serenity Funeral Service Edmonton, Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan, Spruce Grove, Wetaskiwin and surrounding areas	**780-988-2929**
	Trinity Funeral Home Edmonton	**780-474-4663**
Red Deer and area	**Parkland Funeral Home** Red Deer, Eckville, Blackfalds and area	**403-340-4040** anytime, 24/7
Olds and area	**Heartland Funeral Services** Olds, Didsbury, Innisfail, Sundre and area Didsbury 403-335-4773, Innisfail 403-227-0006, Sundre 403-638-4393	**403-507-8610** anytime, 24/7
Lethbridge and area	**Cornerstone Funeral Home** Lethbridge, and CMS members within 200 km (a travel fee applies) Toll free 1-888-381-7778	**403-381-7777**
Medicine Hat and area	**Cook Southland Funeral Chapel** Medicine Hat and surrounding communities	**403-527-6455**

No partner near you? In many rural communities, funeral prices are higher due to fewer providers and increased operating costs. Before making a decision, consider obtaining a quote from a CMS partner funeral home in the closest urban centre. Depending on the distance involved, transportation costs may be offset by lower overall pricing. Each funeral home's CMS member plans are on coopmemorial.org.



What to Do When a Member Passes Away

Losing a loved one is a deeply emotional and challenging experience. During this time, you are not alone. The Cooperative Memorial Society (CMS) and our trusted funeral partners are here to guide and support you through the next steps. This guide will help you navigate the process and ensure that arrangements are handled smoothly.

Understanding Funeral Arrangements for CMS Members

Some CMS members have planned their funeral arrangements in advance, while others have not. Funeral homes affiliated with CMS can check the CMS database to see if any preferences have been recorded or funeral plans purchased. Additionally, the deceased may have left instructions with their personal representative (executor) or next of kin.

Immediate Steps to Take

1. Notify the Funeral Home

- Contact a CMS-affiliated funeral home to ensure the deceased receives the discounted funeral plans available to members.
- Inform the funeral director that the deceased was a CMS member. You do not need the membership number—funeral homes can retrieve member details using search criteria such as address or email.
- Provide any organ, body, or tissue donation details if arrangements were made.
- The funeral home will coordinate the transfer of your loved one and arrange a meeting with the personal representative (executor) to discuss funeral plans.

2. Inform Key Family Members

- Notify immediate and extended family in person, by phone, or electronically via Zoom, Google Meet, or a private Facebook Family Page to share updates and coordinate decisions.

3. Secure the Home and Vehicle

- Lock the home and vehicle to protect personal belongings.
- Ensure the car is legally and securely parked to avoid towing or fines.
- If the home will be vacant, notify:
    - Local police (non-emergency line)
    - Landlord or property manager (if applicable)
- Arrange for temporary pet care, if needed.

Working with the Funeral Director

The Funeral Director Will:

- Check the CMS database for any funeral information recorded by the deceased.
- Guide the personal representative in selecting a CMS plan (if one was not pre-selected or prepaid).
- Provide a contract outlining all services and costs.
- Assist with legal documentation, including:
    - Registration of Death (a legal requirement in Alberta)
    - Statement of Death, which is required to obtain a Death Certificate
    - Completing vital statistics forms using the member's profile information

The Personal Representative Will:

- Ensure the deceased's wishes are followed.
- Follow the selected CMS plan to avoid unnecessary expenses.
- Communicate clearly with the funeral director if they do not want additional services beyond the CMS plan.
- Consider bringing a family member or friend for emotional support during discussions.

Additional Important Steps

4. Notify Key Contacts

- Inform:
  - Employers
  - Close friends and extended family
- Check email accounts and contact lists for additional people who need to be notified.

5. Manage Social Media Accounts

- Decide whether to post an online announcement based on the deceased's preferences.
- For Facebook, you can:
  - Memorialize the account
  - Delete the account (if a legacy contact was assigned, they can manage this process)

6. Redirect Mail

- Use Canada Post's Mail Forwarding service to prevent mail from accumulating and to identify subscriptions, creditors, or accounts requiring cancellation.
- Contact Canada Post Customer Service at 1-800-267-1177 or visit their website for online services.

7. Write the Obituary

- Save costs by writing the obituary yourself using CMS guidelines and templates, or use free resources available online.
- Consider creating two versions:
  - A detailed obituary for online sharing
  - A shorter version for newspapers to minimize publishing costs
- To protect against identity theft, avoid including the exact birth date.

8. Consider After-Care Services

Some funeral providers offer after-care services (*may have additional fees for this service*), including:

- Applying for death benefits (e.g., Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Veterans' benefits)
- Cancelling driver's licenses and bank accounts
- Handling estate tax matters

If the personal representative prefers to manage these tasks independently, they can use the CMS' Guide for Personal Representatives in Alberta.

Helpful Resources

- McInnis & Holloway Funeral Homes – *Remembering a Life: What to Do When a Loved One Passes Away* (A compassionate guide for Calgary and surrounding areas)
- Parkland and Heartland Funeral Homes – Funeral Pre-Planning Booklet (Funeral planning guide for central Alberta)
- Connelly and McKinley Funeral Homes – Funeral & Cremation Guide (A resource for families in Edmonton)
- Government of Alberta – *Saying Farewell* (A comprehensive guide to funeral planning and dealing with loss)

For additional support, check with other CMS's funeral service providers for tailored resources and assistance.

You Are Not Alone

If you have any questions, please talk to the funeral director or call CMS—we are here to help you through this process.

What Happens After Your Loved One Is Taken Into the Care of the Funeral Home

A Guide for Families of Cooperative Memorial Society Members

When a Cooperative Memorial Society (CMS) member dies, the funeral home selected through their membership is contacted to bring their loved one into its care. Many families are unfamiliar with what happens next. Understanding the process can provide reassurance during a difficult time and help ensure that your loved one's wishes are respected.

1. Bringing Your Loved One Into Care

Trained funeral home staff will come to the place of death, whether it is a private residence, hospital, hospice, or care facility.

Your loved one will be transferred with dignity and respect to the funeral home's care centre. Any personal belongings accompanying them will be carefully documented and safeguarded.

As a CMS member, your loved one's funeral provider has agreed to specific service standards and pricing arrangements designed to support families during this time.

2. Confirming Identity and Reviewing Membership Information

The funeral home follows established procedures to ensure your loved one's identity is accurately confirmed and maintained throughout the process.

The funeral director will:

- Verify the individual's identity through appropriate records and documentation.
- Securely record and safeguard personal effects.

- Confirm CMS membership and any funeral preferences or plans that may already be on file.
- Obtain the medical and legal documentation required to proceed with funeral arrangements.

These steps help ensure that your loved one's wishes can be carried out accurately and respectfully.

3. Care Provided by the Funeral Home

Your loved one will receive professional care in accordance with their wishes, cultural traditions, religious practices, and the arrangements selected by the family or personal representative.

Depending on the circumstances, this care may include:

- Temporary refrigeration while arrangements are being finalized.
- Basic care and preparation.
- Dressing in clothing selected by the family.
- Embalming, if requested by the family or required for specific circumstances such as public viewing or transportation.

The funeral director can explain the options available and any costs associated with services not included in a CMS plan.

4. Legal and Administrative Requirements

The funeral home assists families with the necessary paperwork and registrations, including:

- Registering the death with Alberta Vital Statistics.
- Obtaining permits required for burial or cremation.
- Ordering death certificates when needed for estate administration and other legal matters.
- Arranging any special documentation required for transportation outside Alberta or Canada.

Your funeral director will guide you through these requirements and answer any questions you may have.

5. Meeting With the Funeral Director

A funeral director will meet with the family or personal representative to discuss arrangements and next steps.

This meeting typically includes:

- Reviewing any funeral preferences or plans previously selected by the CMS member.
- Confirming the arrangements the member wanted, where known.
- Explaining the CMS plan options available if no plan was selected in advance.
- Discussing any additional services the family may wish to consider.

Families are always free to make different choices; however, selecting services outside the CMS plans may affect the pricing and benefits available through membership. The funeral director can explain any implications before decisions are made.

Whenever possible, families are encouraged to consider and honour the wishes expressed by their loved one.

A Reassuring Thought

By becoming a CMS member, your loved one took an important step toward easing the burden on family members. In many cases, key decisions have already been considered or documented, helping reduce uncertainty during a difficult time.

The funeral home's role is to carry out those wishes with professionalism, compassion, and respect. CMS works with its contracted providers to promote fair pricing, transparency, and quality service for members and their families.

Questions You May Wish to Ask

- Can we spend time with our loved one before burial or cremation?
- Are there opportunities for identification or private family viewing?
- What services and costs are already included in the CMS plan?
- If no plan was selected, what CMS options are available?
- How long can arrangements remain in place before a service or disposition occurs?
- Can cultural, religious, or personal preferences be accommodated?
- What documents or information should we provide at this stage?

Important Information for Families

You do not need to present a CMS membership card.

Funeral providers have secure access to the CMS membership database and can verify membership status and any funeral plans or preferences that may be on file.