

2020 Edition



Wrangell Community

Final Arrangements & End of Life Information

Hospice of Wrangell



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*Our sincere thanks to the
Foundation for End of Life Care, Juneau, Alaska
and to the
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Cover photo by Vincent Balansag

Table of Contents

What to do...	5
Dying at Wrangell Medical Center	7
Unexpected/Accidental Death	7
Expected Death in the Community	8
Morgue	9
State Medical Examiner	9
Death in another community	10
Organ/Tissue Donation	10
Ketchikan Mortuary Services	11
Managing Costs	12
Wrangell Burial Assistance	12
Veteran's Resources	13
Social Security	14
Wrangell Cemeteries	14
Cemetery Pricing	15
Burial at Sea	16
US Navy Program	16
Sea Services Veterans Program	17
Death Certificates	18
Funerals and Memorial Services	20
Obituaries and Death Notices	21
PREPARING FOR APPROACHING DEATH	22
SIGNS OF APPROACHING DEATH	27
Appendix A: Social Security Information	30
Appendix B: Obituary Information	31

Introduction to the March, 2020 edition

You may be reading this booklet at a time around the death of a loved one. We hope this will provide helpful information to assist you as you support your loved one during his or her last days and as you make arrangements following a death.

—Hospice of Wrangell—



Hospice of Wrangell is a non-profit volunteer group. They provide no medical care. Contact 907 305-0007. Here are some of their services:

- Harriet's Helpers, trained volunteers to support those who are frail and/or at end of life with respite care, errands, and other services to meet individual needs.
- Loan Closet of hospital beds, wheelchairs, commodes, and other durable medical equipment for free use by those in need
- Care Notes to families for a year following a death
- The Dove Tree Ceremony to support those grieving during the holiday season



This 'what to do' information is taken from "A Guide for Helping Those You Love" by Virginia Palmer and Harold J. Geiger

What to Do the First Hour Following a Death 🌿

If the person dies unexpectedly, call 911. Don't disturb the scene.

In the hospital, the time of death will be pronounced.

Do not hesitate to ask for the time alone you need to say goodbye.

The body is removed and quietly taken to the hospital morgue.

What to Do the First Day 🌿

Designate someone to contact family and close friends.

If the body is to go to Ketchikan for cremation, call Ketchikan Mortuary, 907 225-4550.

Gather information for the death certificate as quickly as possible (pg 18)

What to Do the First Three Days 🌿

See if the deceased had pre-arranged plans for burial or a service.

Consult with Ketchikan Mortuary, church leaders, family, or other for help making funeral plans. If finances are a problem, contact Wrangell Burial Assistance (page 12)

Send Death Certificate information to Ketchikan Mortuary as quickly as possible and ask for certified copies.

Contact the Wrangell Sentinel with a Death Notice. Consider an announcement on social media.

What to Do the First Week

Stop any direct deposits such as Social Security.

Prepare an obituary.

What to do the First Two Weeks

Locate the will and notify the executor or personal representative.

Contact insurance companies about how to file a claim.

Notify all brokerage firms of the date of death so the exact balance can be determined correctly for the estate total.

Notify all banks and credit card companies. Know if the accounts were joint or single.

Contact the airline to ask to transfer air miles from the deceased's account.

Determine the value of any property owned by the deceased.

Check on special pensions and Social Security payments.

Contact the three credit bureaus about the death to prevent fraud:

Equifax	equifax.com
Experian	experian.com
Transunion	transunion.com

Dying at Wrangell Medical Center

Patients and families should talk with staff about hospital procedure and their own expectations both before and after death. Arrangements can be made for clergy to come in and provide spiritual support. Volunteers are available through Harriet's Helpers to sit with the dying person so they do not die alone. Staff make every effort to notify the family or designated surrogate when they recognize death is imminent.

The Wrangell Medical Center is now part of SEARHC, the Southeast Alaska Health Consortium. Some previous policies and procedures at the hospital have changed and more changes will come when the new hospital is completed in 2021. However, the staff remains committed to working with patients and their families regarding end of life decisions about medical care and comfort procedures. Their revised advance directive form is more understandable and user friendly. Having a copy of an advance directive (either the old form or the newer version) on file will help ensure a patient's wishes are followed if s/he is unable to communicate at end of life.

Whenever possible, nursing staff arrange for a dying person to be in a single room so there is privacy for loved ones to visit at any time. After death, the deceased may usually remain in the room for a period of time during which loved ones may say farewell, wash/dress the body, etc. The body is then quietly transported to the facility's morgue.

Unexpected / Accidental Death

If a death is unexpected or accidental, notify Wrangell Police as soon as possible. Call 911. They will investigate the situation, coordinate the

removal of the body to the morgue, and inform you if the body needs to go to Anchorage for examination or autopsy by the State Medical Examiner. Wrangell has no coroner.

Expected Death in the Community

Many people say they would prefer to die at home rather than in a facility. It is helpful for them and their loved ones to prepare by participating in the Comfort One Program. Working with a physician, there is a discussion about whether to provide life-saving measures such as CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) performed on them when their breathing and heartbeat stop.

Once enrolled in Comfort One, emergency responders will not perform CPR. If there is no Comfort One and the ambulance is called, responders must provide all available life-saving measures. At the time a physician enrolls a patient in the Comfort One program, the patient is given the original enrollment form. Patients and families are encouraged to keep the form in a visible or easily accessible location.

If a person has a Comfort One order and their death is expected, loved ones may take their time to say farewell to the deceased in the home. Once the person has died the local police must be notified. The police are required to do an investigation following a death in the home, but these can be brief and limited if the physician has verified that the death is expected and the Comfort One order is in place. It is encouraged that the scene NOT be disturbed prior to police arrival as this will be a factor in the police investigation. They can then arrange transport to the hospital morgue.

Loved ones are reminded that using 911 will result in emergency responders arriving quickly and they are mandated by law to provide CPR if someone is still alive unless a Comfort One order is presented.

Morgue

The Wrangell Medical Center morgue is the only facility in the community for refrigerated storage of a body. A body must be held in refrigeration if it is to remain more than 3 days before burial. Even under refrigeration, a body begins to decompose.. Burial without refrigeration of the body must take place within 3 days. With refrigeration, burial may be delayed.

Arrangements can be made with hospital staff or with a Ketchikan Mortuary representative to view the body of a loved one in the morgue.

Ketchikan Mortuary makes arrangements for bodies to be transported via Alaska Airlines from the morgue to the crematorium in Ketchikan for cremation.

State Medical Examiner

Alaska State law requires the State Medical Examiner to investigate the circumstances and determine the cause and manner of death in all deaths that are not under the care of a physician and is:

- + Sudden, when a person is in apparent good health,
- + Suspicious, unusual or unexplained,
- + A death not due to a natural cause (accident, homicide, suicide)

The cost of transporting a body to and from Anchorage for autopsy, if needed, is covered by the state. Detailed information is provided on the following web page: www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/MedicalExaminer or by calling 907 334-2200.

Death in Another Community

Within Alaska or outside the state, arrangements may be made through mortuary representatives for a body to be flown back to Wrangell for burial. Ketchikan Mortuary representatives have relationships in place with other funeral directors to make these arrangements. Local police or hospital providers can assist you to contact funeral services in other locations, or to contact Ketchikan Mortuary and ask for their help.

If a person dies outside Alaska, a body must generally be embalmed before it is flown back to this state for burial. Cremation does not involve embalming.

The funeral director in the other community will coordinate with local representatives of Ketchikan Mortuary for a body to be picked up and brought to the morgue, a church, or directly to the cemetery.

Organ/Tissue Donation

Life Alaska Donor Services is the donation organization serving the state of Alaska. They are notified by medical or other personnel following most deaths in Alaska in order to evaluate the potential for organ/tissue donation. The medical condition at the time of death will determine what organs and tissues might be donated. Wrangell's medical facility is

inadequate to support organ donation, but body tissue and cornea harvest has occurred in the past.

More information is available at www.lifealaska.org, or call 800 719-5433 during business hours.

Mortuary Services

Ketchikan Roesel Mortuary 90711 225-4550, directed by Ron Randall, serves Ketchikan and southern Southeast Alaska communities. The following services are provided:

1. Gathering information for death certificates and obtaining copies
2. Obtaining appropriate consents for cremation and arranging transport of a body to Ketchikan for cremation there
3. Arranging for loved ones to visit the deceased while the body remains in the hospital morgue
4. Sale of caskets, urns, and headstones
5. A hearse with driver and casket gurney for transport of a body
6. Information and assistance with all phases of burial in Wrangell
7. Coordination of cemetery services with City and Borough of Wrangell
8. Arranging transport of a body out of town for embalming and burial elsewhere

9. Ketchikan Mortuary provides cremation services at a crematorium located in Ketchikan.

10. Preparation of a bulletin for a memorial service.

As cremation is an irrevocable action, Ketchikan Mortuary requires that either a person pre-authorize their own cremation OR that an authorization form be completed by the next of kin following a death. If there is no spouse, and the deceased person's children are the next of kin, all surviving children need to sign the authorization before cremation can occur. The pre-authorization form, once signed, is filled with Ketchikan Mortuary.

Managing Costs

Wrangell Burial Assistance is a local group organized to provide financial relief and support to those responsible for the burial or cremation of loved ones.

Contact them at (509) 398-3779 or wrangellbac@gmail.com

Applications are available on their website, wrangellburialassistance.com

Some people have funds set aside to cover their 'final expenses' for burial or cremation. In other situations, loved ones will pay these costs.

If the deceased has no funds or resources available there are several places where help can be sought. Ketchikan Mortuary or other funeral directors are familiar with many of those sources and can help file applications. The state's Public Assistance General Relief for Burial program is very limited, paid directly to the vendor: the deceased can have no more than \$500.00 in resources.

Consider direct burial. Simply ask your funeral home for one of the least expensive casket models available (or have a less expensive casket shipped in from a third-party seller online i.e. Costco, Amazon etc.), and then ask for the body to be sent directly to the cemetery for burial. If a third-party casket is ordered, the family is solely responsible for its shipping, transport and unpacking at the morgue. There is no law requiring embalming prior to burial, except in circumstances in which a body will be taken across state lines for burial.

When a body is cremated no casket is needed. Most states require that a body be placed in some kind of container for cremation, but usually a large cardboard box is all that's required. There is no rule that requires a memorial service to be held at a funeral home or cemetery. In many parts of the U S there is no requirement that burial be done in a cemetery, but here in Wrangell, the borough code requires it.

Many funeral homes, including Ketchikan Mortuary, allow people to pre-pay a funeral plan, locking in to current prices. If an out of state funeral home is used, Ketchikan Mortuary will close out and return the prepaid funds for use at the other facility.

Veterans Resources

The Department of Veterans Affairs pays certain burial and funeral allowances. Go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp> for eligibility and rules.

For the non-service-related death of an eligible veteran outside a VA hospital, the VA pays a \$300 lump sum toward burial and funeral expenses.



For other benefits, including the presentation of an American flag and playing of taps at a veteran's funeral, ask your funeral director or contact someone from the local American Legion. As of March, 2020, contact Harry Churchill Sr. at 874-2726, Bill Privett at 305-0231, or Marilyn Mork at 874-2189.

Social Security -
See the information page, Appendix A in this booklet.

Wrangell Cemeteries

Wrangell currently has two cemeteries. The older is Wrangell Memorial Cemetery adjacent to City Park. The second is Sunset Gardens Cemetery. The Borough operates a Columbarium, an above-ground structure of vaults accommodating urns containing cremains (ashes). Each niche or vault is 12" x 12" x 15 1/2" and may hold one or two urns. More information is available online at wrangell.com, search 'columbarium'.

The Borough Clerk, Kim Lane, is available during business hours at City Hall (907) 874-2381, to answer questions or help with the necessary procedures pertaining to Wrangell's cemeteries, including:

- Purchase of cemetery grave plots and Columbarium niches
- Purchase of memorial plaques
- Requests for services for opening and closing of grave plots and niches
- Installation of headstones
- Arranging to pay in full or making a plan for partial payments
- Contacting the Public Works Department

Inform the Borough Clerk of the date and time of the scheduled burial, plus other pertinent information needed. She will contact the Public Works Department to implement the necessary services. Note that the cost of services on holidays or weekends is higher than on business days. Also failure to give notice at least 48 hours in advance may result in additional costs.

Police escort service can be arranged upon request.

Wrangell's code requires uniformity of the city's cemeteries. Markers and headstones are limited by size and weight. Planting of trees and shrubs is prohibited, along with fences or other structures. Only Public Works may place markers or headstones, and they must comply with the borough specifications. Temporary decorations may be placed on or near a grave on the day of burial, Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veteran's Day, but must be removed within 7 days.

Cemetery pricing as of March, 2020

Single Grave Plot - \$330

Opening/closing a grave, M-F - \$900, holiday/weekend - \$1085

Burial of cremated remains in a grave plot M-F- \$180, weekends - \$360

Note: cremated remains of several family members be be interred in the same plot with permission of the owner.

Niche in the Columbarium - \$330

Open/close columbarium niche M-F- \$120, weekend - \$330

Headstone installation - \$120

Any owner of an unused grave plot may return the grave plot to the City & Borough of Wrangell, as long as they provide written documentation to the Borough Clerk's office. A refund will be initiated.

Burial At Sea

According to federal regulations human remains may be buried at sea under specified conditions. The EPA has a comprehensive web page with the information and requirements at <https://www.epa.gov/ocean-dumping/burial-sea>.

Please note the requirement that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) be notified within 30 days after burial. The form is available on the website above.

U. S Navy Program

The United States Navy offers a sea burial program free of charge for the following individuals:

- ~ Members of the uniformed services,
- ~ Retirees and veterans who were honorably discharged from any branch of the service.
- ~ Dependent family members of active duty personnel, retirees, and uniformed services veterans.

More information is available Monday – Friday 7:30 am to 4:00 pm central time at 1-866-787-0081

Sea Services Veterans Program

For those veterans wishing a more personal, customized service, or wish to specify a burial location, many veterans and their families choose a

private sea burial performed by Sea Services. More information on their website, <http://www.seaservices.com/> or by calling 1-888-551-1277

Scattering Ashes

With a few exceptions there are no legal restrictions on what may be done with cremation ashes. They can be scattered across any body of water or across any private property, with the permission of the landowner. They can be stored in a home, and they can even be buried on any private property – again, with the permission of the landowner.

When it comes to non-specific public land, (e.g. rural woodlands, state or federal property) "don't ask, don't tell" is as fitting advice as any. No recognizable memorial may be set up on public land, and there is no expectation that a site may be reserved in any way. As a guide, you should not scatter ashes within 100 yards of public roads or walks or public trails.

There is no "scattering ashes policy" in any state to ensure proper etiquette or require permits. The health, safety or environmental issues are minimal, although recent radiation treatments might be a concern. Your own moral compass/judgment can be equally right within the bounds of common sense.

Be advised that cremated remains or "ashes" as most people call them, can be stark white, a little like aquarium gravel, and therefore rather conspicuous; not at all like the "ashes from a fireplace". You may wish to consider a shallow burial unless you're scattering ashes in water.

Death Certificates

A Ketchikan Mortuary representative will contact the next of kin following a death to obtain information to complete a death certificate. Information should be gathered as quickly as possible, as it may take several weeks following a death to obtain a physician signature and process the death certificate with the State of Alaska. The fastest way to obtain the death certificate is to request copies through the mortuary representative.

Information needed for a death certificate includes:

- *Decedent's legal name and any alternate names s/he may have used*
Date of birth and place of birth (city and state, foreign country)
Sex and social security number of the decedent
Place of residence
- *Ever served in armed forces? (yes or no)*
Marital status at time of death
Surviving spouse's name (use wife's maiden name)
Father's full name.
- *Mother's full name prior to first marriage*

To order copies of a death certificate from the state Bureau of Vital Statistics, now called Health Analytics & Vital Records, work with Ketchikan Mortuary staff, get the request form online, or from the local court. The request can be mailed or faxed. The state website is alaska.gov; search "death certificate".

The first copy is \$30 and additional copies are \$25 each. Expedited requests have an additional fee of \$11.

Only a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of the deceased may obtain copies of a certified death certificate. Proof of your relation to the decedent is required when submitting your application. Siblings will need to provide a copy of their birth certificate showing parental relationship to the decedent.

A death certificate can also be furnished to a legal representative or to a person who provides documentation showing the death certificate is needed for the determination of property rights.

Use the full first, middle, and last names as they appear on the death certificate when filling out the request form. They can only process requests for deaths that occurred in Alaska. For deaths that occurred outside of Alaska, requests must be sent directly to the appropriate state.

Some items for which a certified copy of the Death Certificate may be required:

- * *Social Security Administration*
- * *Veterans benefits*
- * *Transfer of a joint checking or savings account or safe deposit box without “or” or “and/or” appearing in the account’s ownership*
- * *Transfer of an individual bank account or safe deposit box*
- * *Transfer of title of real estate ownership*
- * *Transfer of title of ownership for all registered motor vehicles*
- * *One for each life insurance policy or union death benefit claim*
- * *One for each burial or funeral insurance plan claim*
- * *Transfer of ownership of stock (may need one for each transaction)*

- * Transfer or redemption of bonds, treasury bills or other*
- * To roll over an IRA account or 401K or pension plan*
- * Federal and State tax returns*
- * Outstanding loan or credit card balances*
- * Post Office to set up mail forwarding to next of kin*
- * Execution of a will*
- * Family records*

Funerals and Memorial Services

From a group of friends 'raising a glass' informally to a large church service, there are many ways to memorialize a person who has died.

Wrangell has a number of churches, each with its clergy and lay leaders able to assist with funerals and memorial services. If you cannot easily locate someone from your desired faith tradition, contact the Ministerial Association at 874-2244. They will help you.

Ketchikan Mortuary can prepare memorial bulletins for a service, and so can some churches and private individuals in Wrangell.

Announcement of a funeral or memorial service can be made as a community service announcement on KSTK radio, 874-2345, and placed in the Wrangell Sentinel, 874-2301. Facebook pages such as Wrangell Community Board offer another way to announce a gathering.

Arrangements for flowers/wreaths for a funeral or memorial service may be started through Ketchikan Mortuary representatives or through Wrangell's local florist, Groundswell, 907 268-4894

Obituaries and Death Notices

See Appendix B for an obituary information form

Obituaries are vitally important because every one tells the story of someone's life — who their parents were, who their children are —but, just as importantly, where they've been and what they've done. It is a lasting record of a person's life.

Generally obituaries are free unless a person wants it written out a certain way or formatted a certain way. All obituaries may be edited by the publishers. The free obits also include a picture.

Family members provide information for Death Notices in the Wrangell Sentinel, which are formatted by Sentinel staff and run for free.



The following information was gathered from many hospice resources and is used by permission. Special thanks to Evergreen Health Hospice Services, Kirkland, Washington.

PREPARING FOR APPROACHING DEATH

When a person enters the final stages of the dying process two different but closely related dynamics are at work. On the physical plane the body begins the process of shutting down, which will end when all the physical systems cease to function. Usually this is an orderly and undramatic progressive series of physical changes which are not medical emergencies requiring invasive interventions. These physical changes are a normal, natural way in which the body prepares itself to stop and the most appropriate kinds of responses are comfort-enhancing measures.


The other dynamic of the dying process involves the emotional-spiritual-mental plane. The “spirit” of the dying person begins the final process of releasing from the body, its immediate environment, and all attachments. This release also tends to follow its own path, which may include resolving whatever is unfinished of a practical nature and receiving permission to “let go” from family members. These “events” are the normal, natural way in which the spirit prepares to move from this existence. The most appropriate kinds of responses to the emotional-spiritual-mental changes are those which support and encourage this release and transition.

When a person’s body is ready and wanting to stop, but the person is still unresolved or unreconciled over an important issue or with a significant relationship, the person may continue to live. Even though they may seem uncomfortable or debilitated, they may linger in order to finish whatever needs finishing. Likewise, when a person is emotionally-spirituality-mentally resolved and ready for this release, but his/her body has not completed its final physical process, the person may continue to live until the physical shutdown is complete.

The experience we call death occurs when the body completes its natural process of shutting down, and the “spirit” completes its natural process of reconciling and finishing. These two processes need to happen in a way appropriate and unique to the values, beliefs and lifestyle of the dying person. Therefore, as you seek to prepare yourself as this event approaches, we want you to expect and how to respond in ways that will help your loved one accomplish this transition with support, understanding and ease. This is a great gift of love you have to offer your loved one as this moment approaches.

The physical, emotional, spiritual and mental signs and symptoms of impending death which follow are offered to help you understand the natural kinds of events which may happen, and how you can respond appropriately. Not all these signs and symptoms will occur with every person, nor will they occur in this particular sequence. Each person is unique and needs to do things in his/her own way. This is not the time to try to change your loved one, but a time to give full acceptance, support and comfort.


The following signs and symptoms described are indicative of how the body prepares itself for the final stage of life.

 **Coolness:** The person’s hands, arms, feet and sometimes legs may be increasingly cool to the touch and, at the same time, the color of the skin may change. The underside of the body may become darker. The skin may become mottled. This is a normal indication that the circulation of blood is decreasing to the body’s extremities and being reserved for the “most vital organs.”




What you can do: Keep the person warm with a blanket, as allowed.


Electric blankets should not be used.

 **Sleeping:** The person may spend an increasing amount of time sleeping and appear to be uncommunicative or unresponsive and at times be difficult to arouse. This normal change is due in part to changes in the metabolism of the body.


What you can do: Sit with your loved one, gently hold his/her hand, do not shake or speak loudly, but speak softly and naturally. Plan to spend time with him/her during those times when he/she seems most alert/awake. Speak to him/her directly as you normally would, even though there may be no response. Never assume the person cannot hear since hearing is generally the last of the senses to be lost.

 **Disorientation:** The person may seem to be confused about the time, place and identity of people surrounding him/her including close familiar people. This is also due in part to metabolic changes.


What can you do: Identify yourself by name as you enter rather than asking the person to guess who you are. Speak softly, clearly and truthfully when you need to communicate something important to the patient related to his/ her comfort such as “It’s time to take your medicine,” and explain reasons for the communication, such as “So you don’t begin to hurt.”

 **Incontinence:** The person may lose control of bladder and/or bowel function as the muscles in that area begin to relax.


What you can do: Discuss with your team what you can do to keep your loved one clean and comfortable.

 **Congestion:** The person may have gurgling sounds coming from his/her chest or throat; these sounds may become very loud. This normal change is due to the decrease of fluid intake and an inability to cough up normal secretions. Suctioning usually only increases the secretions and can cause sharp discomfort. The sound of the congestion does not indicate the onset of severe or new pain.

What you can do: Gently turn the person's head to the side and allow gravity to drain the secretions. You may also gently wipe the mouth with a moist cloth.


 **Physical Restlessness:** The person may make restless and repetitive motions such as pulling at bed linen or clothing. This often happens and is due in part to the decrease in oxygen circulation to the brain and to the metabolic changes.

What you can do: Do not interfere with or try to restrain such motions. To have a calming effect, speak in a quiet, natural way, lightly massage the forehead, read to the person, or play some soothing music.


 **Fluid and Food Decrease:** The person may have a decrease in appetite and thirst, wanting little or no food or fluid. The body will naturally begin to conserve the energy which is expended on these tasks. Do not try to force food or drink into the person, or try to use "guilt"

or persuasion to coax them into eating or drinking something; to do this only makes the person more uncomfortable.

What you can do: Small chips of ice, frozen Gatorade or juice may be refreshing in the mouth. If the person is able to swallow, fluids may be given in small amounts by syringe (ask your hospice team for guidance). Glycerin swabs may keep the mouth and lips moist and comfortable. Lip balm (Vaseline, Carmex, etc) may be applied to the lips. A cold, moist washcloth on the forehead may also increase physical comfort.


 **Urine Decrease:** The person's urine output normally decreases and may become "tea" colored or have an unusual odor. This is referred to as concentrated urine. This is due to the decrease in fluid intake as well as the decrease in circulation through the kidneys.

What you can do: Consult with your medical team to determine whether there may be a need to insert or irrigate a catheter.


 **Breathing Pattern Change:** The person's regular breathing pattern may change with the onset of a different breathing pace. One particular pattern consists of breathing irregularly (i.e., shallow breaths with periods of no breathing of 5 to 30 seconds and up to a full minute). This is called "Cheyne- Stokes" breathing. This person may also experience periods of rapid, shallow, pant-like breathing. These patterns are very common and indicate decrease in circulation in the internal organs.

What you can do: Elevating the head of the bed and/or turning the person on his/her side may bring comfort. Gently hold his/her hand. Speak gently.


NORMAL EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL & MENTAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF APPROACHING DEATH

 **Withdrawal:** The person may seem unresponsive, withdrawn, or in a comatose-like state. This indicates preparation for release, a detaching from surroundings and relationships, and the beginning of “letting go.”


What you can do: Since hearing remains intact to the end, speak to your loved one in your normal voice. Identify yourself by name when you speak. Gently hold his/her hand. Say whatever you need to say that will help the person “let go.”

 **Vision-like Experiences:** The person may speak to, or claim to have spoken to, person(s) who have already died. They may also see, or claim to have seen, places not presently accessible to you. This does not indicate a hallucination or a drug reaction. The person is beginning to detach from this life and preparing for the transition.


What you can do: Do not contradict, explain away, belittle or argue about what the person claims to have seen or heard. Just because you can't see or hear it does not mean it's not real to your loved one. Affirm his/her experiences. They are normal and common. If they frighten your loved one, explain to him/her that they are normal.

 **Mental/Spiritual Restlessness:** The person may perform repetitive and restless tasks. This may in part indicate that something is still unresolved or unfinished and is interfering with the “letting go” process. Your hospice team members will assist you in identifying what may be happening, and help you find ways to help the person find release from the tension or fear.


What you can do: Recall a favorite place the person enjoyed, a favorite experience, read something comforting, play music, and give assurance that it is OK to “let go.”

 **Decreased Socialization:** The person may only want to be with a few people or even just one person. This is a sign of preparation for release and affirming from whom the support is most needed in order to make the transition. If you are not a part of this “inner circle” at the end, it does not mean you are not a loved one or are unimportant. It means you have already fulfilled your task with this person and it is time for you to say “Good-bye.”


What you can do: If you are a part of the final “inner circle” of support, the person needs your affirmation, support and permission.

 **Unusual Communication:** The person may make a seemingly “out of character” statement, gesture or request. This may indicate that he/ she is ready to say “Good-bye” and is “testing” to see if you are ready to let him/ her go.

What you can do: Accept the moment as a beautiful gift when it is offered. Kiss, hug, hold, cry and say whatever you most need to say.

 **Giving Permission:** It can be difficult to give permission to your loved one to “let go” without making him/her feel guilty for leaving or trying to keep him/her with you to meet your own needs. A dying person will normally try to hold on (even though this may bring prolonged discomfort) in order to be sure that those who are going to be left behind will be alright.

What you can do: One of the greatest gifts you have to give your loved one at this time is your ability to release the dying person from this concern and give him/her reassurance that it is alright to “let go” whenever he/she is ready.

 **Saying Good-bye:** When the person is ready to die and you are able to “let go” then it is time to say “good-bye.” Saying “good-bye” is your final gift of love to your loved one. It achieves closure and makes the final release possible.

What you can do: It may be helpful to lie in bed with them and then say everything you need to say. It may be as simple as saying, “I love you.” It may include recounting favorite memories, places and activities you shared. It may include saying, “I’m sorry for whatever I contributed to any tensions or difficulties in our relationship.” It may also include saying, “Thank you for.....” Tears are a normal and natural part of saying “good-bye.” Tears do not need to be hidden from your loved one or apologized for. Tears express your love and help you “let go.”

How Social Security Can Help You When a Family Member Dies

You should let Social Security know as soon as possible when a person in your family dies. Usually, the funeral director will report the person's death to Social Security. You'll need to give the deceased's Social Security number to the funeral director so they can make the report. Some of the deceased's family members may be able to receive Social Security benefits if the deceased person worked long enough in jobs insured under Social Security to qualify for benefits. Contact Social Security as soon as you can to make sure the family gets all the benefits they're entitled to.

Please read the following information carefully to learn what benefits may be available.

We can pay a one-time payment of \$255 to the surviving spouse if they were living with the deceased. If living apart and eligible for certain Social Security benefits on the deceased's record, the surviving spouse may still be able to get this one-time payment. If there's no surviving spouse, a child who's eligible for benefits on the deceased's record in the month of death can get this payment. Certain family members may be eligible to receive monthly benefits, including:

- A widow or widower age 60 or older (age 50 or older if disabled);
- A widow or widower any age caring for the deceased's child who is under age 16 or disabled;
- An unmarried child of the deceased who is: Younger than age 18 (or up to age 19 if they're a full-time student in an elementary or secondary school); or o Age 18 or older with a disability that began before age 22;
- A stepchild, grandchild, stepgrandchild, or adopted child under certain circumstances;
- Parents, age 62 or older, who were dependent on the deceased for at least half of their support; and
- A surviving divorced spouse, under certain circumstances.

If the deceased was receiving Social Security benefits, you must return the benefit received for the month of death or any later months. For example, if the person dies in July, you must return the benefit paid in August. If received by direct deposit, contact the bank or other financial institution and ask them to return any funds received for the month of death or later. If paid by check, do not cash any checks received for the month the person dies or later. Return the checks to Social Security as soon as possible.

However, eligible family members may be able to receive death benefits for the month the beneficiary died.

Go to [socialsecurity.gov](https://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call 800 772-1213

WRANGELL SENTINEL OBITUARY INFORMATION

PO Box 798 Wrangell, AK 99929 Phone: 907-874-2301 Email: wrgsent@gmail.com

Name of Deceased_____Age_____

Time & Date of Death_____

Place of Death (hospital/home/etc) _____

Cause of Death (optional)_____

Birth Date_____City and state of birth_____

Names of parents_____

College/Schooling_____

Occupations_____

Memberships/Organizations _____

Honors/Awards_____

Preceded in death by_____

Survived by_____

Memorial Services (date/time/place)_____

Officiating Minister & Pallbearer Names_____

Place of Burial_____

Other Information_____

All obituaries are subject to editing. We will print this obituary as soon as possible

APPENDIX B

after we receive the information, as space is available.