When a death is referred to the Coroner

When a sudden death occurs

In most cases, when a sudden or unexpected death occurs, the Coroner must establish the medical cause of death through a post mortem. This is a medical examination of the deceased carried out for the Coroner by a pathologist at a local hospital. The deceased is now under the Coroner's jurisdiction and will remain so until the Coroner releases the body for the funeral arrangements to be made.

Removal of the deceased to a hospital mortuary

Buckinghamshire County Council is responsible for providing the Coroner's Service in Buckinghamshire, and has an approved list of suitably qualified and equipped funeral directors who act for the Coroner to remove the deceased from the place of death to the hospital mortuary. You may use the firm that provides this service to arrange the funeral, or you are free to choose another if you prefer. The firm carrying out the removal is permitted to leave a business card but they are not allowed to sell themselves in any other way to you.

After the post mortem

Once the medical cause of death has been established the funeral can take place. If the death is found to be due to natural causes, the body will be released immediately after the post mortem examination, and the Coroner's Officer will let you know so that the funeral arrangements can be made.

If the death is not due to natural causes, an inquest will be necessary and the Coroner's Officer will give you further details about what will happen next.

Registering a death after the post mortem where no inquest is held

The Coroner will send a form to the register office giving details of the cause of death. To register the death you will need to make an appointment to see a Registrar. You can make an appointment:

- By telephone: Monday to Friday 9.00-4.30pm for the Aylesbury and North Bucks area call 01296 382581 and for the Wycombe and South Bucks area call 01494 475200.
- Online: at www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/Registrars/registering_death

Who can register a death?

You can register a death if:

- You are related to the person who has died
- You were with the person when they died
- You live at the place the person died and there is no known relative to register
- You are instructing the funeral director

You may bring a friend or relative with you when you see the Registrar.

The Registrar will see you in private and will ask questions about the person who has died. You will be asked to check the information given and to sign that it is correct.

You will be asked for the following information:

- Date and place of death
- Full name of the person who has died, and any other names used
- Their name before they were married, if this was different, and any other names used
- Their date and place of birth
- Their occupation and marital status, (if they were married, widowed or had formed a civil partnership) the full name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner
- Their usual address and postcode

- Date of birth of the surviving spouse or civil partner (if applicable)
- National Health Service medical card, if you have this
- Whether they are in receipt of a pension paid from Government funds (i.e. NHS, Civil Service)

The person registering will also be asked their relationship to the deceased and their name and address.

If you wish to purchase copies of the death certificates please ensure you bring cash or a card to pay for these. The cost of certificates can be found on our website www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/Registrars/fees.page

How do I register a death after an inquest?

The Coroner will arrange for the death to be registered, normally within a few days of the inquest, so there is no need for you to go to the register office. Copy certificates can be purchased from the register office via an application form, on-line or over the telephone with a debit or credit card. Details can be found at: www.buckscc.gov.uk/registration

If you have any queries or concerns about the arrangements for a post mortem, the release of the body of the deceased or any other part of the process, please contact one of the Coroner's Officers on 01494 534939 during office hours Monday to Friday.

Out of hours for emergencies only call Thames Valley Police on 0845 8 505 505