

Post-Death Checklist

- Take all your parent's belongings from the building. This may include jewelry, false teeth, purse, clothes, etc. Nice things sometimes vanish fast.

- Call relatives and friends. Get help with this and divide the list among all of you. It's never pleasurable to deliver bad news. You can usually make everyone you contact feel better if you can tell them you were there when your parent died and that they went peacefully.

- Write an obituary for local newspapers. Go through your parent's scrapbook. Find out the important events in their life, and how they contributed to make life better for others. Pull together their Obituary Checklist from Chapter 3. Refine and enrich the obituary. This is a rewarding process, and you may learn things about your parent you never knew. Include the time and address of the service in the obituary so your parent's relatives and friends in the community can attend. Call the obituary editor at your local newspaper and find out what's required.

- While you have the old pictures out, collect a few you feel really capture your parent's essence and use them with your computer's word processor to write an invitation to the service. You can print these out and use them to invite family and friends of your parent to the service.

- Cancel services such as meals-on-wheels, home health agency aides, or volunteers. Tell them when the service will be, as they may have gotten to know your parent and want to attend.

- Check up on any animals. If your parent lived alone, you may have inherited a pet.

- Go to your parent's house and put timers on the lights and the TV. You don't want someone vandalizing or robbing their home before their affairs can be handled.

- Maintain their yard. You don't want it to show neglect and look as though someone isn't living there anymore.

- Collect the mail and file a change of address to your address. There may still be important mail arriving for the next three months.

- Stop any newspaper subscription unless you want to pick it up everyday. Nothing shouts that no one is home like unopened newspapers on the front lawn.

- Notify the Social Security Administration of the death at (800) 772-1213. Call any other pension or retirement services your parent may have been receiving benefits from. Most of them have a small death benefit.

- Call the cremation service or mortuary and order at least six death certificates. Certificates of death will be required for:
 - credit card agencies
 - Veteran's Administration
 - pension
 - life insurance
 - banks