

Hospital To Funeral Timeline

A Clear, Step-By-Step Timeline For Christian, Catholic And Freethinker Families

When a loved one passes in hospital, everything can feel like it's moving at once, even though very little actually needs to happen in the first hour. This guide lays out what typically happens and when, from the moment of passing through to the funeral day and the weeks that follow, so your family always has a sense of what comes next.

1. Contact Your Funeral Director First

Once the hospital has attended to the immediate steps, the next call worth making is to your funeral director. From this point on, we coordinate the transfer, documentation, and every stage of the timeline below on your family's behalf.

All we need from you at this stage is a little information — your loved one's full name, age, which hospital they're at, and their faith or preference. We take it from there.

2. The Complete Timeline At A Glance

When	What Happens
First Hour	The hospital confirms passing and attends to your loved one; family is given time before anything further is arranged.
Hours 1–4	Family informs close relatives; funeral director is contacted to begin coordinating next steps.
Hours 4–24	Certificate of death is issued; your loved one is transferred to the wake venue or a holding facility while the venue is prepared.
Day 1	Wake venue setup is completed; visitation begins.
Day 2–4	Visitation continues; eulogies, order of service, and funeral day logistics are finalised.
Funeral Day	Final service held, followed by the procession to the crematorium or cemetery.
After	Ashes collected (if cremated); administrative matters are addressed over the following weeks.

3. At The Hospital: What Happens First

Once passing is confirmed, hospital staff will attend to your loved one and give your family time before anything further needs to be decided. A doctor issues the certification of death, which your family will need to collect — your funeral director can advise on the exact process at the specific hospital involved, as it varies

slightly between institutions.

4. Transfer To The Wake Venue

Once engaged, your funeral director arranges transfer of your loved one from the hospital to the wake venue, or to a holding facility if the venue isn't ready yet. This is usually completed within a few hours of being contacted, and does not need to happen the moment passing occurs — there is no need to rush this step.

5. Setting Up The Wake

- **HDB void deck** — Tentage, chairs, and the altar are typically set up within a few hours once the permit is confirmed.
- **Funeral parlour** — Setup is usually faster, since the hall itself doesn't need to be built up from scratch.
- **Church or parish hall** — Timing depends on the venue's own schedule and availability.

6. The Wake Days

Most wakes in Singapore run for three to five days, though shorter or longer arrangements are both possible depending on your family's circumstances, especially if relatives are travelling from overseas. During this period, family typically receives visitors, finalises the order of service, and confirms who will deliver the eulogy.

7. The Day Before The Funeral

- Final headcount and seating arrangements confirmed with the venue
- Officiant, celebrant, or pastor confirms the order of service
- Printed booklets, if any, are ready for distribution
- Transport for the funeral day procession is confirmed

8. Funeral Day, Hour By Hour

Time Of Day	What Typically Happens
Morning	Final viewing, followed by the sealing of the casket.
Late Morning	The funeral service is held at the wake venue or church.
Midday	The procession departs for the crematorium or cemetery.
Early Afternoon	The committal takes place — cremation or burial, with a short closing service.

Exact timing shifts depending on venue distance and crematorium scheduling, but your funeral director will confirm a specific timetable with your family the day before.

9. Cremation Or Burial: What Happens After

If cremation was chosen, ashes are typically ready for collection within a few hours to a couple of days, depending on the crematorium's schedule. Your funeral director will confirm the exact collection window and

can arrange transfer directly to a columbarium niche if one has already been decided on. If burial was chosen, the committal at the graveside marks the close of the day's proceedings.

10. In The Days And Weeks That Follow

- Collect and store the certificate of death safely, as it will be needed for several administrative matters
- Notify banks, insurers, and CPF Board of any accounts or nominations to be settled
- Cancel or transfer utilities and subscriptions in your loved one's name
- Consider memorial observances your family may wish to mark in the weeks or months ahead

11. Common Questions About Timing

How quickly do we need to decide on a funeral director?

There's no need to rush this in the first hour. Most families take some time with their loved one before making any calls — the timeline above only begins once your family is ready.

Can the wake be shorter if we'd prefer a simpler arrangement?

Yes, a shorter wake of a day or two is entirely possible, and increasingly common for families who prefer a simpler farewell. Let your funeral director know your preference early so the timeline can be planned around it.

What if the hospital is far from our preferred wake venue?

This doesn't meaningfully affect the timeline — your funeral director arranges the transfer regardless of distance, and it's built into the hours-to-a-day window before the wake begins.

12. A Simple Timeline Checklist

- Take the time your family needs before making any calls
- Contact your funeral director to begin coordinating the transfer
- Collect the certificate of death from the hospital
- Confirm the wake venue and setup timing
- Use the wake days to finalise the order of service and eulogy
- Confirm the funeral day schedule the day before
- Confirm ashes collection or burial arrangements after the committal
- Set aside time in the weeks after for administrative matters

From the first call to the final farewell, one director will guide your family through every stage of this timeline, so you always know what's happening next.

Call us any time: [+65 9169 1859](tel:+6591691859)