

**Buddhist Church of Lodi**  
**Guidelines in the Event of Death**  
**Online Version**

This pamphlet has been prepared to serve as a guideline in the event of a death in the family.

Except for minimum standards that should be met in the Buddhist tradition, the bereaved family has all the options, and these are merely *guidelines and suggestions*.

**1. Contact doctor or coroner**

**2. Contact Minister**

- A. The minister will come as soon as possible to offer comfort and perform the Makura-gyo (bedside service).
- B. The Makura-gyo, or bedside service, is a short service held shortly following death. The immediacy is dependent upon circumstances such as location, surroundings, time of death, etc.
- C. In case of death in the early hours of the morning such as 2 AM, the bedside service may be held at a more convenient hour when relatives and close friends can attend.
- D. Give your phone number and directions to your home very clearly.

### **3. Contact a funeral home**

In the event of death in a hospital or rest home, a nurse will contact the doctor and the mortuary of your choice. If the death occurs at home, it is the family's responsibility to call the doctor and the funeral home.

### **4. Preparation of funeral arrangements**

It is the custom in Lodi for the minister and a representative of the church to visit the home and assist the family in the preliminary arrangements for the services (funeral and/or memorial).

In recent years many families have chosen to hold memorial services rather than funeral services. In such cases, the first seventh day service is often combined with the memorial service. In the case of a full funeral, the family may decide if they wish to have the seventh day service immediately following the funeral or at a later date.

- A. Decide on a date for the service.
- B. If the deceased has a Buddhist Name (*homyo*), present it to the minister.
- C. If the family wishes to publish the obituary in the Japanese newspaper, please prepare the following information and contact the Hokubei, Nichibei, and/or Rafu Shimpo representative:
  - a. Name of survivors - specify the primary mourner (*moshu*) and immediate family members.

- b. Name of parents, brothers and sisters.
- c. Brief biography of the deceased.

D. The information required by the minister and church representative is shown on the “Funeral Information Sheet.” This form will be left with the family so they can fill in their preferences as to chairperson, representatives for incense burning, etc.

## **5. Complete arrangements with mortuary**

The funeral director will offer information and arrange for:

- A. Casket (if funeral service)
- B. Cremation or burial
- C. Placing obituary news and notice in local papers
- D. Plot, urn, niche, headstones, etc.
- E. Assist you with various necessary paperwork concerning:
  - 1. Social Security benefits
  - 2. Insurance claims
  - 3. Death certificate

In case the deceased is not a citizen, obtain additional copies of the death certificate. Two copies are to be sent to the Japanese Consulate within 7 days of death.

- F. Printing of service program.

## **6. Items to take to mortuary for a funeral service**

- A. Ojuzu/Onenju
- B. Okesa
- C. Personal clothing

## **7. Flowers to order**

- A. Bouquets for the altar
- B. Osonae (manju offering)
- C. Casket spray (if funeral service)
- D. Flowers to adorn portrait or photograph (if memorial service)
- E. Family floral pieces (discretion of family)
- F. If you have pallbearers, white boutonniere for each pallbearer

## **8. Otoki (refreshments)**

Refreshments generally consisting of snacks and drinks such as tea, coffee, and cold drinks may be served in the reception hall after the service.

## **9. Memorial Services**

A. Traditionally, memorial services were held weekly on every 7th day until the 49th day. However, this has been abbreviated as follows:

1. First 7th day memorial service
2. 35th or 49th day memorial service
3. 100th day memorial service (optional)
4. First Obon following death (Hatsubon)
5. Shotsuki Hoyo (monthly memorial service): This is a memorial service for all who have passed away in that particular month, usually on the first Sunday.

B. At the first year and thereafter, memorial services are observed on:

1. 1st year
2. 3rd year
3. 7th year
4. 13th year
5. 17th year
6. 25th year
7. 33rd year
8. 50th year

C. General information for memorial services:

Please make reservations with the church/minister early. Memorial services may be held either at home or church. The family is responsible for the following:

1. Flowers for altar.
2. Altar offerings (manju, fruit, etc.)
3. Photograph of the deceased and Homyo.