

Muslim Funeral Guide

for Residents of the San Francisco Bay Area

This guide is in the format of a quick reference manual to be used when death occurs in any Muslim family in the Bay Area. It is not intended to be a detailed explanation of the burial procedures explained here. Since it is intended to be more of a checklist, references to the pertinent ayahs of the Quran and the Hadith are not included in the main body, except in a few places. The reader is encouraged to get this information from many books and pamphlets available in the Masjid libraries, Islamic bookstores and on the web.

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1. When a Muslim/Muslimah is at the Point of Death

Family members of the dying person and his most pious friends should be informed and should be present at his side to help him turn his thoughts to Allah. They should encourage him very gently to repent, remind him about all the good deeds that he did, about Allah's mercy, and Allah's forgiveness so that he may anticipate Allah's mercy and Allah's favors.

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said: " Let no Muslim die except expecting and hoping the best from Allah" (Muslim).

Those who are present near a dying Muslim should do the following :

They should be kind and patient.

They should never leave him alone.

They should give him hope, not allowing him to collapse out of pain or panic.

The following are the sunnah that Islam encourage us to do over a dying person :

1. Advise the dying person to say ***La ilaha illa-Allah*** [There is no god but Allah]

The purpose is to remind him of the Oneness of Allah. Mu;adh ibn Jabal states that the messenger of Allah, (pbuh) said, "He whose last words are 'La ilaha illa-Allah', shall enter Paradise." [Abu Daw'ud; Al-Hakim - a sound hadith]. But one who is unable to speak might say these words in his heart. The scholars are of the opinion that no pressure should be put on the dying person.

2. Lay the dying person so that the qibla is on his right side.
3. Recite Surah Yaasin from the Qur'an.
4. They should make Dua' (Supplicate) to Allah to help him go through situation easy, and forgive him.

2. **When Death Occurs**

When the person is confirmed dead, family members or those who are present should first say:

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un [Verily we belong to Allah, and truly to Him shall we return]

Close the eyes of the deceased.

- They should bind his lower jaw to his head so that it does not sag.
- They should cover all his body completely with a clean sheet.
- They should make Dua' (Supplicate) to Allah to forgive him.
- They can mourn his loss; Weeping is allowed –but wailing or breast-beating, tearing hair or clothes or any other form of mourning loudly is strictly not allowed.
- They should hasten to prepare the body for washing, shrouding and burial.
- There is no Islamic teaching of putting flowers, candles etc., in the deceased's room.

A. If Death Occurs in the Hospital (either due to an emergency, accident or due to terminal illness)

1. Ask the doctor in attendance to issue a death certificate. This is extremely important. Without this the County will not issue an internment certificate. Without these two documents, it is illegal to move the body and/or bury it.
2. Call the Islamic Organization and the individuals listed in the Appendix. Get guidance on immediate next steps
3. Call the Mortuary (any of the ones listed in the appendix) and arrange for the body to be transferred to the funeral home.

The mortuary will secure the release of the body from the hospital and move it to the funeral home, where the washing and preparation for burial will take place. The mortuary will also arrange to secure the internment certificates from the county. All of the above are separately charged services. Please consult with the Masjid funeral representative before signing up for these services: Under no circumstances should the body be handed over for embalming or autopsy services (unless the police is involved) as these are strictly prohibited in Islam.

4. The County burial permits can also be secured by a family member who can go physically to the county offices and collect the internment certificate, upon presentation of the death certificate

A. If Death Occurs At Home

1. Call 911 – Even if the death is due to terminal illness
2. Call the family doctor. If none available, the 911 response team will takeover the process and ensure the death certificate is issued by the county office (typically the Coroner's Office)
3. Call the Islamic Organizations
4. Call the Mortuary, follow steps above

3. **Preparation for Washing the Deceased (Ghusl)**

A. Kafan and Ghusl Materials

The following materials are needed for washing the deceased (Ghusl) and for shrouding (Kafan) after the Ghusl. Most of the Masajids in the Bay Area carry Kafan kits. ***Also, the Masjid will provide a trained muslim brother or sister to assist in these steps, Insha'Allah.***

White Unstitched Sheets (7ft X 7ft): three for males; five for females
(*King-size bed-sheets from the linen department of the local 24-hour stores will do.*
Remember to cut the stitched seams with a pair of scissors. Also cut (3) thin strips to use as ties for the tying the Shroud and holding it in place)

- Camphor, Sidr
- Non-Alcoholic perfumes (Attar)
- Warm water
- Soap
- Gloves
- Wash-cloths
- Cardboard box (low-cost option recommended) to place the body in, after Ghusl

B. People who can and should give Ghusl

When a Muslim dies, it is the responsibility of his family or other Muslims to wash him according to the Islamic rites of washing the deceased. Two or three persons may perform the washing.

The person(s) who may wash the deceased should :

- Be a trustworthy, and honest adult Muslim(s).
- Know the Islamic way of washing the dead and be able to carry out the washing.
- Not make any comment on the body of the deceased.

NOTE:

- Close relations are encouraged for washing the body
- If the deceased is a male, then ONLY males should wash him.
- If the deceased is a female, then ONLY females should wash her.
- For a married person, the spouse may perform the washing.
- For a child, either males or females may do the washing.

C. Washing of the Deceased (Ghusl)

A. PLACE OF WASHING :

The deceased's body should be washed in a clean, secluded, and private place where clean water and soap are available. Gloves or pieces of cloth are needed.

The body of the deceased should be washed with water and, if available, lotus leaves, or camphor (To be used in the final wash).

The washing should be done three or five, or any more odd number of times if necessary.

B. STEPS OF WASHING :

1. The body of the deceased should be placed on a table or alike, the deceased's clothes should be removed , and the body should be covered with a sheet of cloth.

2. The head and the upper body should be raised slightly to insure the washing water with exudations from the body flows down and does not run back to the body.
3. The Aura (Private parts) of the deceased should be covered with a piece of cloth (The Aura of a male is from the belly button to the knee in the presence of males, for the female is the same in the presence of females) The washer should start washing by saying:" Bismillah " [In the name of Allah]
4. The washer winds a piece of cloth around his hand, and with this he cleans away any impurities from the body using water. Then he should dispose of this piece.
5. The washer should take another piece of cloth around his hand, press lightly the stomach of the deceased so as to expel, if possible, any remnants from it, and then wash the body of all impurities using water. Then he should dispose this piece of cloth.
6. The washer should take another piece of cloth around his hand (May use gloves), and wash the covered private parts, then dispose of this piece of cloth.
7. The washer should perform Wudu (Ablution) on the deceased without inserting the water in the nose and in the mouth.
8. The washer should clean the body with water and soap (If available), starting from the head (hair, face and beard {Men}), then the upper right side of the body then the left side, after that the lower right side then the lower left.
9. In the case of a female, her hair should be loosened, washed, combed, and be braided in three braids, and placed behind her back.
10. The washing should be done three times, or five times, or seven times, as needed, providing that after washing the head, wash the right side before the left, and the upper parts before the lower ones.
11. In the last wash, the washer may use camphor, or some perfume with the water.
12. After that the body should be dried with clean towel.
13. Then the body should be totally covered with a white sheet.
14. Get ready to start the shrouding.

SPECIAL NOTE: In case the deceased is a female in her menstrual period or have child birth bleeding, padding should be used to prevent blood from leaving the body.

NOTE: It is recommended that those who performed the washing should take a bath .
It is recommended that those who performed the washing should make Wudu.
There is no Islamic teaching of reading the Quran during the Ghusul.

D. Shrouding the body with the Kafan

Shrouding should start just after washing the body of the deceased. It is recommended to use white sheets from inexpensive material. Extravagance is not recommended in the Kafan (Shroud).

THE KAFAN OF A MALE

The Kafan of a male should consist of three white winding sheets about {7 x 7 feet}, clean and large enough to conceal the whole body, after having been perfumed with incense. Use 4 tie ropes, each 7 feet long.

The material of the sheet should not be silk, nor should any gold be used.

STEPS OF SHROUDING :

1. The winding sheets should be spread out one on the top of the other .
2. The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on his back on the winding sheets.
3. Some scent or perfume may be put on those parts of the body upon which one rests during prostration, that is the forehead, nose, hands, knees, and feet.
4. If it is possible the deceased's left hand should be placed on his chest, then put his right hand on the left hand like the way in the Salat (Prayer).
5. The edge of the top sheet is folded over the deceased right side, then the other edge over his left side. Then the second sheet should be folded the same way. The third and the largest sheet should be treated the same way.
6. These sheets should be fastened with a piece of cloth {Tie ropes}, one above the head, another under the feet, and two around the body.

THE KAFAN OF A FEMALE

The Kafan of a female should consist of five white garments, (Two winding sheet, a long loose sleeveless shirt {From shoulder to feet}, a waist wrapper, and a head veil), these should be large enough to cover the whole body and may be perfumed with incense, a loin cloth may be used to bind the upper part of her legs, use 4 tie ropes, each one is 7 feet long.

STEPS OF SHROUDING :

1. The garments are spread out (First: winding sheets {7 x 7 feet}, Second: the long loose sleeveless shirt {3 1/2 x 14 feet, with a hole in the middle line for the head}, Third: waist wrapper {6 feet x 3 1/2 feet }, Fourth head veil {a 4x4 square feet white sheet}, and Fifth: the loin cloth {12 inches wide x 4 feet long}).
2. The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on her back on the shroud. Some scent or perfume may be put on those parts of the body upon which one rests during prostration, that is the forehead, nose, hands, knees, and feet.
3. The loin cloth is bound round her upper legs (Acts like underwear).
4. The waist wrapper is tied in place.
5. Put on the sleeveless shirt (Long to cover the body from the shoulder to the feet) .
6. Put the head veil.
7. The deceased's left hand should be placed on her chest, then put her right hand on the left hand like the way in the Salat (Prayer).
8. The edge of the top sheet is folded over the deceased right side, then the other edge over his left side. Then the second sheet should be folded the same way.

9. These sheets should be fastened with a piece of cloth {Tie ropes}, one above the head, another under the feet, and two around the body.

NOTE: There is no Islamic teaching of writing any thing on the shrouds

4. Transportation to the Masjid for Funeral Prayers (Salat –ul –Janazah)

- The deceased should be transferred to the Masjid for Salat –ul –Janazah . This transfer is a service done by the mortuary in the hearse provided by them.
- Salatul Janazah is required to be performed in congregation to request pardon for the deceased and all dead Muslims, and to wrap them all in Allah’s Mercy.
- It is preferable that Salatul Janazah be performed outside the Mosque or the Musalla (Prayer room), like in activity rooms or courtyards.
- Salatul Janazah is a collective obligation. A Muslim should not hesitate to participate in it, whether or not the deceased, or his relatives are known to him.
- Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said : " If a Muslim dies and forty Muslims, who do not associate anything with Allah , join in the Salatul Janazah, Allah accepts their prayers for him." (Muslim).
- Salatul Janazah is said silently, except the Takbeer and Tassleem. All conditions for regular Salat are required in Salatul Janazah such as Tahara, Wudu, clean body and clothes, neeyah (Intention), and facing the Qiblah.
- There is a reward for attending Salatul Janazah for both the deceased and those who make
- the Salat according to the following Hadith.
- There are specific times when it is prohibited to perform Salatul Janazah, unless it becomes
- necessary, due to the condition of the body, to perform it quickly and then bury the body.
- This is due to the Hadith of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who forbade us to pray, or bury our dead during these specified times (Muslim).

These prohibited times are :

From sunrise until the sun is fully risen,
At the zenith of the sun (the sun at meridian), until it passes the meridian,
From when the sun pales before sunset until it has set.

5. Funeral Prayers - Method

- It is preferable that Salatul Janazah be performed outside the Mosque / the Musalla.
- All conditions for regular Salat are required in Salatul Janazah such as Tahara, Wudu, clean body and clothes, neeyah (Intention), and facing the Qiblah.
- Muslims should form a minimum of three lines facing the Qiblah. The one most closely related to the deceased (son, father, brother etc.) is most qualified to lead the Salat, even over the Imam of the Masjid, provided he knows how to conduct the Salatl Janazah.

- If such a person is not available or cannot do it then the Imam of the Masjid or any other knowledgeable Muslim can lead the prayer
 - If there is only one Muslim with the Imam, he should stand behind the Imam.
 - The body should be placed in front of the person who leads the prayer; parallel to the lines of the People standing in prayer. The head of the deceased should be to the right side.
 - The Imam should stand by the middle of a female body, and by the head for a male body.
 - Behind the Imam, the males stand in lines, then children, then females
 - There are NO Rukuh, Sujud, Athan, or Eqama.
1. Having the appropriate neeyah (Intention), raise your hands in the usual manner and say :
" **Allahu Akbar** ".
 2. Fold your right hand over the left hand in the usual manner. Recite the **Fatiha** silently .
 3. Then say : “**Allahu Akbar**” and recite the **Tashahood** .

The Tashahood is :- (Allahumma sallee ala-Muhammad wa'ala alee Muhammad kama sallayta ala Ibrahim wa ala alee Ibrahim, wa barik ala Muhammad wa'ala alee Muhammad kama barakta ala Ibrahim wa ala alee Ibrahim, innaka hamidun Majeed).

[This means : " O Allah! Grant peace to Muhammad and his family as you did to Ibrahim and his family. O Allah! Bless Muahammad and his family as you blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly you are Most Glorious and Most Praiseworthy]

4. Then say : “**Allahu Akbar**”

Then make dua' (Supplicate) for the deceased; there are specific duas for this in the appendix

5. Then say: “**Allahu Akbar**”

Then make dua (Supplicate) for all dead Muslims.

In the case of a dead baby or young child, make dua (Supplicate) for his parents.

Then say : " **Assalamu alaykum wa rahmatullah**", like you say in other Salats.
Tasleem can be said only once.

6. Transportation to the Cemetery

After the Salatul Janazah is done, lift the body gently back to the hearse and prepare the convoy for transfer to the cemetery.

E. Route Maps and Funeral Stickers

Make copies of the route maps (given in the appendix for Five Pillars Farm) and distribute to all joining the funeral procession

Handout the funeral stickers (bright orange-colored) to everyone. The funeral home will usually supply these to the family

F. Traffic Rules

- Obey all traffic rules as you would otherwise; there are no special dispensations for funeral processions; Motorcycle escorts are recommended when there are more than 50 cars.
- Ensure everyone knows where the cemetery is; that way they need not drive dangerously to be together with the procession.
- Leave headlights on; this makes it easier for others to know there is a funeral procession
- Use the slow lane all the way to the cemetery, unless the lane exits in which case use the next lane

7. Arrival at the Cemetery

- Upon arrival at the cemetery, gently lift the body from the hearse and carry it on the shoulders for the last portion of the journey.
- Carry the body to the grave site (which should have been dug by now – see checklist)
- Have the appointed *lead person* for burial take over the process

8. Burial Procedure

1. A grave is dug deep enough to totally hide the body of the deceased.
2. The grave should be always perpendicular (Horizontal) to the direction of Qiblah.
3. Only men are allowed to attend the burial.
4. All Muslims who are present should remember death, the hereafter, and that one day he too will be buried.
5. They should keep quiet (No talking unless it is necessary).
6. The deceased's male relatives are expected to put the body in the grave, putting the body in the grave should be carried out only by Muslim men..
7. A female is placed in her grave either by her husband, her sons, her father, her brothers, or her uncle.
8. The deceased's body should be entered to the grave from the middle of the grave
9. Those who enter the body of the deceased in the grave should say : ***Bismillah wa ala millati rasulillah***, [In the name of Allah and in the faith of the Messenger of Allah]
10. The deceased's body should rest on his right side, and should be close to the wall and supported so that the body will not fall back, the deceased's face should be towards the Qiblah.

11. Those who put the deceased in the grave should not have had sexual intercourse with their wives the night before and should be in a state of Tahara.
12. They should undo the ties on the head and the feet.
13. They should put above the body a layer of wood or big stones, so that earth will not be put directly on the body when they fill the grave with earth.
14. After the body is totally covered, it is desirable to throw three handfuls of soil into the grave, with each handful saying:

Minhaa khalaqnaa kum [From the earth did We create you]

Wa feehaa Nu'eedu kum [And into it shall We return you]

Wa minhaa nukhrijukum taaratan 'ukhrraa [And from it shall We bring you out once again]

- Then the grave should be filled up with sand or soil that was taken out from the grave; no additional soil should be brought from elsewhere.
- It is allowable to put a mark on the grave or a stone to know the grave.
- Just after the burial all Muslims, including the deceased's relatives, may stay in the cemetery for a while and make dua' (Supplicate) for the deceased, since he is being questioned by the Angels.
- Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) in an authentic Hadith said : " Make dua' of Istighfar (Supplicate for forgiveness) for your brother and request steadfastness for him because he is now being questioned " (Abu Dawood).

NOTE:

It is recommended that women and girls do not enter the cemetery and come closer to the grave to see the burial process.

It is prohibited to build any form of construction on the grave, or decorate the grave.

Arranging day of mourning on the third day after death, or on the seventh, or on the twentieth day, or on the fortieth day, or on the anniversary of the death - all are **Bid'ah** practices which people have introduced; there is no authentic Sunnah for doing the same

Transferring the deceased to another country is not allowed

There is no Islamic teaching of revealing the face of the deceased after putting the body in the grave.

There is no Islamic teaching of shouting special Dhikr (Certain words to remember Allah) before, during, and after burial.

There is no Islamic teaching of reading the Quran in the cemetery.

There is no Islamic teaching of putting flowers, food, water, photograph, money or anything around the grave that will benefit the deceased.

There is no Islamic teaching of slaughtering an animal during or after burial.

There is no Islamic teaching of staying in a state of sadness for one year.

There is no Islamic teaching that the relatives of the deceased should wear black clothes.

It is prohibited to cremate the body of dead Muslim, even if the deceased requested it before his death.

It is prohibited to put candles on the grave. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said in an authentic Hadith: " Curse those who light lamps on graves " (Authentic-Ahmed).

It is also disliked (Makruh) to pray in the cemetery (Bukhari).

Performing autopsy on a dead Muslim is totally prohibited, unless it is requested by court order.

SPECIAL CASES

1) Miscarried Fetus :

If the fetus is less than four months old (Mother was pregnant for less than four months) then the fetus may not be washed; the fetus should be wrapped in a piece of white cloth and buried. Then there is no Salatul Janazah for this fetus.

If the fetus is more than four months old (Mother was pregnant for more than four months), then the fetus may be washed, shrouded (Using one or two winding sheets to cover the whole body), and then Muslims have the choice whether to perform Salatul Janazah or not.

2) Children :

- A) Before reaching the age of puberty, a child may be washed by males or females.
- B) Shrouding a child: for females use a shirt and two winding sheets and for males two or three winding sheets may be used
- C) For those children who reached the age of puberty, they should be dealt with as an adult { Female child like female adult, and male child like male adult}, but then Salatul Janazah must be performed.

3) Martyr :

The body of a Martyr should not be washed, nor be shrouded but buried with the same clothes that people found him with.

The strongest opinion of Muslim scholars is not to offer Salatul Janazah for martyrs since Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not offer it for the martyrs of the battle of Uhud.

9. PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES

- It is a Muslim's duty to offer condolences, comfort, and sympathy to the family and the relatives of the deceased. This strengthens the relationships within the Muslim community.
- When offering condolences, words should be chosen carefully and said gently to convey sympathy and to encourage the family and the relatives of the deceased to accept Allah's will and to help them to get back to their normal life.
- Condolences may be offered to the family and to the relatives of the deceased before, during or after burial for up to three days, but it may be offered even at later time if someone did not hear about it or he was far away.
- It is recommended to leave after offering condolences to give the family time to take care of

- their other affairs, assistance may be offered for anything the family may need, and one may
- stay to help, if asked.

- It is not recommended for the families to hold gatherings for three days or more, and hire people to recite Quran loudly. While the Quran is recited, others eat, drink or talk, disregarding the rules of listening
- to the Quran, and inflicting the family with high expenses.

- It is Sunnah that friends, neighbors and relatives prepare food for the family of the
- deceased, for the loss of the loved one occupies the family's whole attention.

APPENDIX

I. Important Telephone Numbers and Contact List

1. Islamic Organizations and Individuals

- A. Islamic Society of East Bay (Funeral Committee) (510) 429-ISEB
Imam Siraj (Pager, only in death emergency)(510) 742-1111
(510) 770-7120 (Pager)
Br. Imam Siraj (510) 742-1111
Br. Dabeer Siddique (510) 792-2754
Haji Abdul Aziz (510) 471-9676
Br. Abdul Qadir (510) 489-4840
Br. Pervez Ahmed Khan (510) 796-4739
- B. Muslim Community Association (MCA)
Br. Abdur Rehman (408) 301-0132
246-6662
- C. Islamic Center of Fremont, Irvington (510) 656-3292
Br. Mohammed Usman (510) 667-0352 (Masjid)

2. Mortuaries linked to Islamic Organizations

- Chapel of Roses (510) 797-1900
Chapel of Chimes (510) 538-3131
Funeral Home in Santa Clara (408) 984-1001

3. County Telephone Numbers

- A. **Alameda County**
Burial (Internment Certificate) 8:30 AM-4:30 PM
Weekend (Saturday only) Monday - Friday
Alameda County except holidays
1225 Fallon Street
Room 100
Oakland CA 94612

(510) 272-6381
- B. **Santa Clara County**
Recorder
First Floor, East Wing
70 West Hedding Street
San Jose, CA 95110

(408) 299-2481

4. Cemetery Telephone Numbers

- A. Five Pillars Farm Islamic Cemetery, Livermore
At present there is no telephone number, however Office Phone Numbers are:
(510) 657-8397 , (510) 657-8398 (Fax), (510) 498-6339 (Pager)

G. Sample Documents

V. Checklist(s)

1. TELEPHONE CALLS IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH

Doctor for Death Certificate	Name of Person Contacted	Telephone
-----	-----	-----
Islamic Organization <i>Be prepared to provide the following information</i>	Name of Person Contacted	Telephone
-----	-----	-----
Name of Caller; Telephone Number and relationship with deceased		-----
Name of deceased person, details of age/sex etc		-----
Location of dead body – whether at a mortuary, home, hospital etc.		-----
Status of obtaining death certificate from the doctor		-----
Status of obtaining the burial permission (internment certificate) of the county		-----
Plans of burial – time, day, date, location selected etc		-----
Whether Ghusl and transportation have been made or not		-----
Name of Mortuary/Funeral Home Selected	Name of Person Contacted	Telephone
-----	-----	-----
County Office Called for Burial Certificate	Name of Person Contacted	Telephone
-----	-----	-----
Islamic Cemetery Selected	Name of Person Contacted	Telephone
-----	-----	-----

Time and date of burial should be confirmed with the grave-digging ensured prior to arrival of the body to the cemetery

2. KAFAN MATERIALS PURCHASE/PREPARATION

- White Unstitched Sheets (7ft X 7ft): three for males; five for females
- Camphor, Sidr
- Non-Alcoholic perfumes (Attar)
- Warm water
- Soap
- Gloves
- Wash-cloths
- Cardboard box (low-cost option recommended) to place the body in, after Ghusl

3. MASJID/CEMETERY CONFIRMATION

Salatul Janazah Time Agreed	Name : _____
Grave Preparation and Cemetery Arrival Time Agreed	Name : _____
LEAD PERSON FOR SALAT IDENTIFIED	Name: _____
LEAD PERSON FOR BURIAL PROCESS	Name: _____

4. TRANSPORTATION

- Route Maps Copied and distributed
- Funeral Stickers distributed