

VA Central California Health Care System



Dear Family,

On behalf of our VA Central California Health Care System, we would like to express our deepest condolences for the loss of your loved one. We were grateful for the time and opportunity to care for the veteran while he was with us. We thank the veteran for his invaluable service and sacrifice to our country. We understand that this must be a very fragile time for you and your family and would like to remain available as needed. We've put together some key contact information for you and family to navigate during this time of grief and loss. Please do not hesitate to contact us at **559-225-6100 ext 5352**. We will try to address our questions to the best of our abilities.

Again, our sincerest condolences for your loss.

Sincerely,

Veterans Experience Team

VA Central California Health Care System

Some key contact numbers to navigate during this time of loss include:

- 1) **Decedent Affairs** staff will assist with queries regarding death certificate, services, and funeral item (they also have a list of funeral homes and crematories they can share with you if you need assistance). Lorraine Sandoval and her team can be reached at **559-225-6100 ext 5437**.
- 2) **Service Officer**, Mario Flores: **559-241-6418**. He can assist you with post-death benefits items based on the veteran's overall service connection. He also can connect you with service officers in your respective counties.
- 3) **Spiritual Support**, our lead, Chaplain Terry Rommereim, and his team are available to provide spiritual support to you and family. They can be reached at **559-225-6100 ext 5351**.
- 4) **Grief Support, The Hinds Hospice Center for Grief and Healing** can provide ongoing grief support to you and family via phone, virtual group settings, or one-on-one. You and family do not need to be enrolled in hospice to receive this grief support. Their contact information is outlined below.

<https://www.hindshospice.org/patients-caregivers/center-grief-healing/>

[Email: centerforgriefandhealing@hindshospice.org](mailto:centerforgriefandhealing@hindshospice.org)

Hinds Hospice Center for Grief and Healing
(559) 248-8579
2490 W. Shaw Avenue, Ste. 205 (2nd Floor)
Fresno, California 93711
(On West Shaw between Van Ness and Shaw Lane)



OTHER HELPFUL NATIONAL CONTACTS:

- **Call the VA benefits line toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.**
- **Visit the VA benefits web page at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/>**
- **Call the VA Office of Survivors Assistance at 202-461-1077**
- **Visit the VA Office of Survivors Assistance web page at**

<http://www.va.gov/survivors/>

POST DEATH CHECKLIST

I. Immediately Following Death

- Contact decedent affairs office at **559-225-6100 ext 5437** for possible VA funeral benefits (they also have a list of funeral homes and crematories available if you need to identify one).
- Notify families and friends. *You may consider having someone close to you do the notifications during this stressful time.*
- Arrange for the care of dependent persons, if any
- Evaluate the need for security at the decedent's residence
- Find and review the decedent's expressed funeral and burial wishes
- Notify the Health Care Agent or Power of Attorney
- **Locate important papers: Discharge papers (DD214), wills, condicils, trusts, marriage certificates, birth certificates, deeds, recent income tax returns.**

II. In the First Five Days Following Death

- Evaluate the need to have mail, deliveries, and other services held.
- Arrange for mortuary, cemetary, burial, cremation as appropriate (contact decedent affairs more information on this if needed)
- Prepare and arrange for obituary
- Arrange memorial/burial services
- Notify the decedent's banking and financial institutions
- **Keep records of all expenses**

III. Following the Internment/Burial

- Locate safe deposit box
- Locate life insurance policies, other important documents, relationships, accounts, investments, tax returns
- Advise all creditors in writing including issuers of credit cards that the veteran has died.
- Do not pay any of the decedent debts before discussing with the family and/or executor
- Consider consulting an attorney. Your family and friends may be well meaning but many not be legal experts.

IV. Within the First Six Months

- Consider consulting an accountant, or tax attorney to complete the Decedent's financial affairs.

Note: You will be receiving a brief Bereaved Family Survey from our National Veterans Experience Office within the next few weeks. Please kindly let us know in the meantime what else we can do to assist you and your family. Our contact number is 559-225-6100 ext 5352. Again, our sincerest condolences of your loss.