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France

Putting your affairs in order – checklist

- Make a will
- Prepare other instructions: e.g. funeral preferences, advance directives, mandate for future protection
- Designate one or more trusted persons to represent you when you are no longer able to manage your interests
- List all bank accounts, pensions, and other investments
- Collect personal certificates such as birth, marriage, divorce, etc.

www.service-public.fr , the official website of the French administration, contains pragmatic information on many useful topics. The details provided will help you with end-of-life planning and information gathering for a file giving instructions in the event of your death – or after an accident or serious illness when you may be unable to express yourself.

Making a will

A will can be made alone, without a notary; this is known as a holographic will, which can even be in a foreign language. Your will can also be entrusted to a notary and centralized in the FCDDV (fichier central des dispositions de dernières volontés). More rarely, you can create a mystic will in a sealed envelope which does not reveal the contents.

Drawing up a mandate for future protection (mandat de protection future) allows any person of legal age (called the mandator) to designate in advance one or more persons (called the mandatary) to represent him/her on the day when he/she is no longer able to manage his/her interests.

If someone has died, this page sets out the steps you need to take to organize the funeral and inform various organizations:

- Register the death (in France or abroad)
- Notify next of kin
- Declare the death at the town hall (mairie)
- Notify the employer
- Request leave of absence from your employer
- Check the deceased’s last wishes
- Organize the funeral

- Notify the deceased's bank
- Notify any employees of the deceased and take care of the contract
- Pay for the funeral
- Contact social organizations.

Managing the deceased's papers and personal data

- Determine what needs to be done about taxes
- Manage the deceased's principal residence and real estate assets
- Manage the deceased's vehicles
- Gather the necessary documents and information making up the deceased's estate.

Documents to report as you put your affairs in order

- Last wishes, including a will and choice of funeral, potential donation of the body to science, and organ removal
- Advance directives (the recommendation is that they can be deposited with your GP, 'mon espace santé', or a relative – also ADMD, see 'Useful Websites', below)
- Papers, passwords, and other key information can be considered taking into account document retention time.

Useful websites

Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignité (ADMD)
The ADMD is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all French citizens can choose the conditions under which they wish to die. In the absence of a national file set up by the public authorities, advance directives can be filed with ADMD. ADMD already holds the advance directives of almost 50,000 members.

Alliance Vita
Offers an alternative perspective to ADMD, opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide while advocating access to palliative care. It provides information and support for people approaching the end of life and their loved ones.

Organ donation information – dond'organes
'In the name of national solidarity, the principle of presumed consent has been chosen. The law states that we are all organ and tissue donors, unless we have expressed our refusal to be removed during our lifetime.'

Guide juridique des Français de l'étranger March 2023
Contains sections on 'couples and family', 'taxation, formalities', and 'donations and inheritance'.

Happy End

An informative French company that brings people together and guides them regarding death and mourning. It provides services and professionals in a directory, organizes conferences and training courses, and markets online support programmes.

Get through grief better (mieux traverser le deuil)
The site exists to 'inform and accompany you on your bereavement journey' with 'videos, articles, private access to a caring community and individualized pathways'.

SFAP (Société Française d'Accompagnement et de soins Palliatifs)
Founded in 1990, SFAP brings together the main French players in the palliative care movement with nearly 350 federated or independent support associations. It has over 25,000 members expressing a surge of solidarity with people who are ill.

Articles

Fin de vie : comment rédiger ses directives anticipées (End of life: how to draw up advance directives)
Chantal Masson, Merci pour l'info, 13/9/2022
The article talks about the 2016 Claeys-Leonetti 'Leonetti' law and the importance of communicating wishes to the attending physician and designating one or more trusted persons to represent you.

Projet de loi relatif à l'accompagnement des malades et de la fin de vie
Vie publique, République française
(Bill on support for the sick and the end of life, Public life, French Republic) 10/6/2024

Une avancée du plan national soins palliatifs et accompagnement de la fin de vie 2021-2024 : les filières territoriales Ministère du travail, de la santé et les solidarités
(A step forward in the national palliative care and end-of-life support plan 2021–2024: territorial channels, French Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity) updated 26/5/2024

Une doula de fin de vie : pour vivre sereinement ses adieux (An end-of-life doula: for a peaceful farewell) Thanadoulas, Cindy, Cap Retraite, 14/3/2023
The doula is the professional to turn to for psychological help for bereaved loved ones and people at the end of life, [helping them] to live their last moments with serenity.

Planning wills and estates in France
Valentine Marie, Expatica, 15/5/2024
Details aspects of inheritance law for expatriates living in France, including instructions on writing wills.

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