

# *Understanding Cremation*

Choices for a Meaningful Funeral Service



*In recent years, cremation has become an increasingly popular choice. The following provides information on cremation and the options for services when cremation is chosen. It will help answer some of your questions and encourage you to ask others. Most important, it will help you make informed decisions when arranging the type of personalized funeral service that will truly be meaningful.*

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## *What is Cremation?*

The modern practice of cremation dates back to the middle of the 19th century. Cremation is the process of reducing the body to bone fragments through the application of intense heat. This usually takes two to three hours and occurs in a special type of furnace known as a cremation chamber or retort. The remaining fragments are processed into a finer substance and placed in a temporary container.

Many people believe that at the time of death only two basic choices exist: immediate cremation or what might be thought of as a "traditional" funeral that includes viewing and burial. Actually several options are available in between. Cremation is simply one form of disposition (method of caring for the body). There are several opportunities to create meaningful funeral experiences that include cremation.

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## *The Funeral Service and Cremation*

Just like burial, cremation can occur after a funeral where the casket is present. The funeral may be preceded by a public visitation or reception at a location chosen by the family. During this time, the casket may be open or closed. Some families may choose to have a private gathering. Following the funeral ceremony, the body is cremated in the casket or placed in a special cremation container. After cremation, a public or private service may be arranged for the final placement of the cremated remains.

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## *The Memorial Service and Cremation*

A memorial service, like a funeral, is a service of remembrance, only without the body present. Regardless of where the service is held, we can assist you in planning and organizing it. An urn may be present, as a casket would be for a funeral. Sometimes, photographs and/or other memorabilia are displayed. As with a funeral service, the family may wish to hold a visitation or reception prior to the memorial service. If cremation is scheduled immediately following death, it is often possible to arrange a brief private time for the family to see the body prior to cremation and the memorial service.

Depending on where the death occurred, state or provincial laws may require a "waiting period" to occur before cremation can take place. We can advise you as to the regulations in our area and assist you accordingly.

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## *Other Service Options*

These descriptions are simply general types of cremation alternatives. There are literally options within options in creating a service that will be as unique as the person being remembered. Your choices are not required to fit into any particular category. Tell us your thoughts, and we can offer our suggestions on planning a service that will have special meaning.

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## *The Costs of Cremation*

In general, the cost of cremation as a mode of disposition is less than that of burial or entombment. However, cremation charges vary in different locations. And, the total cost will vary depending on what additional services are selected. We will provide a current General Price List with a complete listing of charges, so you can evaluate costs in light of your situation.

## **Important Considerations**

- Crematories generally require that a body be enclosed in a rigid container, providing for the health and safety of the operator and the dignity of the deceased. A range of caskets are available which are suited for formal services followed by cremation, or we can review other alternatives as well.
- An urn serves the same purpose after cremation that a casket does for burial: it holds the remains and becomes part of the memorial site. There are many styles and types of urns available.
- Embalming is often a matter of practical consideration for a service with the body present. For immediate cremation, embalming is not required. We can review with you any legal and health regulations for our area regarding embalming.

## **Memorialization**

Memorialization is the act of establishing a permanent means to commemorate the life of the deceased. Several choices are available including the following.

### **Inurnment**

The urn may be placed within a niche in a columbarium. Columbaria are most often located within a cemetery and may be an entire building, a room or a series of niches along walls. Outdoor settings may include niches built as part of a garden wall. You may be able to include a memorial plaque or nameplate.

### **Burial**

Some people prefer earth burial of the urn, just as a casket. Cemeteries often have special urn gardens or a standard cemetery plot may be used.

### **Scattering**

Some cemeteries also provide areas for the scattering of cremated remains. Some people scatter cremated remains in the air or over water. While this is legal in many areas, this is a decision that should be carefully considered. Many people need a specific location to go for reflection. This emotional need often surfaces later and may be overlooked if scattering takes place too quickly.

## **Pre-Arranging**

Many people preplan their funeral arrangements in a sincere effort to help their families. Pre-arranging lets you select the type of service you want and be assured that adequate funds are available when needed. Contact us for an appointment to discuss the process.



*We hope the information provided has been helpful.  
We are committed to assisting you with all your  
cremation and funeral service questions and needs.  
Please don't hesitate to contact us for a complete brochure  
or more detailed information on this or other topics.*