

## Arranging a funeral or cremation in Oklahoma

We have put together this funeral-planning guide for Oklahoma to help you find the key information you may need to arrange a funeral or cremation. Although the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) 'Funeral Rule' was established to help protect your rights when making funeral purchases, this funeral rule is superseded by local state law in some states. This guide has basic information about some of the crucial decisions you will need to make when funeral planning.

### How do you choose which funeral home or cremation provider is right for your needs?

Choosing the 'right' funeral home can be very important in ensuring your funeral needs are met. Traditionally many people just opted for the local funeral home they knew of or had been referred to. But tradition is changing, and people can often have specific funeral requirements that they need to have met, such as working to a tight budget or wanting something more unconventional. It is always wise to ask around and check reviews on funeral homes, and we would recommend you compare services and costs between providers, as these can vary considerably. It will help to be clear about what your basic needs are to help you narrow down your selection process.

### How do I find a funeral home or cremation provider in Oklahoma?

There are over 600 funeral homes, cemeteries, and crematories in Oklahoma. US Funerals Online lists all funeral establishments in our 'Funeral homes' directory, by state, city, and in zip code order. This does make it easy for you to locate and review the funeral homes and cremation providers in your area. You can also use our Funeral Home Directory section to locate funeral homes in Oklahoma by city.

### Who is responsible for making the funeral arrangements?

Generally, the immediate next of kin or an appointed legal representative will make the funeral arrangements. There is a succession statute [21 O.S. §1158] that specifies who has the responsibility if there are several family members, and it indicates the priority as a spouse, adult children (over 18), parents, and brothers/sisters. There can be exceptions depending on certain circumstances in which case you should consult an attorney.

### Do you want a burial or cremation?

This is probably the single most important decision to be made initially. Choosing between burial or cremation should be an entirely personal choice. Burial has traditionally been the preferred disposition choice in Oklahoma, however, times are changing and cremation is gaining popularity. The cost can be a driving factor in making this decision today, as the average burial costs around \$7,640 (according to the National Funeral Directors Association 2019), and this does not include cemetery costs. In comparison the average cremation costs around \$3,000, so this can significantly save on overall funeral expenses.

In order for a cremation to be conducted a '*cremation authorization*' must be signed by the next of kin, and then a cremation permit is obtained from the State Medical Examiner before the deceased can be cremated. There is a mandatory 48-hour waiting period between the time of death and a cremation being carried out.

## What is the cost of a funeral or cremation in Oklahoma?

This is a question that many get online to try and find out these days. We are all price-conscious consumers today and used to being able to check and compare prices online. Being that making these inquiries can be at an emotionally distressing and time-critical time, it is all the more urgent to be able to obtain the information quickly. Unfortunately, many funeral homes do not disclose prices on their websites. According to the FTC's funeral rule, a funeral home **MUST** have a General Price List (GPL) and provide you with prices if you make an inquiry by phone or in person. You do not have to provide any personal details to make a price inquiry. If a funeral home is reluctant to simply provide you with prices, it is probably a warning sign.

As mentioned above **the average funeral costs around \$7,640 and cremation service can cost in the region of \$3,000. A simple, low-cost direct cremation service can be conducted in Oklahoma for as little as \$945.** Costs do depend upon many of the ancillary services such as clergy, music, funeral stationery, flowers, and obituary notices. If you are concerned about funeral costs, the [DFS Memorials providers in Oklahoma](#) offer low-cost cremation services and affordable burial services. All DFS Memorials providers guarantee to offer a 'best value' direct cremation package.

### DFS Memorials Cremation Providers

Serving Oklahoma City & surrounding areas. Cremation cost from \$945. Call (405) 252-1831

## Can I arrange a 'home funeral' or green burial in Oklahoma?

Yes, you can conduct home death care in Oklahoma. According to Oklahoma statute [59 O.S. §396.19], the family must ensure that a death certificate is filed at the health department. Home funerals and green burials are having something of a revival, and there are organizations that can support you if you wish to look after your loved one's funeral care. Check out our Green Burial Resource section.

Oklahoma laws pertaining to home burial indicate that burial outside of a cemetery within city limits is prohibited. However, if you live outside of city limits you may be able to bury your family on your own property. You would need to check with local county ordinance about zoning laws, and you would need to map out any burial site to be lodged with the property deeds. The general guidance for burial is for it to be at least 150 feet from any water supply and 25 feet from any power lines or boundaries.

## Sending funeral flowers in Oklahoma

Funeral flowers are an integral, but an often expensive enhancement to a funeral service. US Funerals Online partners with BloomsToday to offer our visitors a 25% – 50% discount on funeral flower orders. Visit our [Funeral Flowers](#) page or phone toll-free at [\(800\) 317-4807](tel:8003174807).

## Is embalming required in Oklahoma?

No, embalming is not required by law, however, state law does require refrigerated storage if a body is to be held longer than 24 hours. Refrigeration is an adequate preservative means; therefore, you should not feel obligated to have your loved one embalmed if you really do not wish to. Some funeral homes will have policies that stipulate embalming for a public viewing or open casket service. Embalming may be required if the deceased needs to be transported.

## What are my options for purchasing a casket or alternative container?

Firstly, you should be aware that there is no law that requires a casket. A casket, or alternative container, is a practicality required for transporting the body. An alternative container, such as a cardboard or plywood box, is all that is required for cremation purposes. Although the FTC funeral rule was supposed to enable consumers to have the right to purchase caskets from elsewhere than a funeral home, Oklahoma is one of the few states that has such a powerful local lobby that only a licensed funeral director can sell caskets in Oklahoma.

## What are burial and cemetery plot requirements in Oklahoma?

We mentioned above the requirements for burial on your own land. If you are opting for a burial plot in a designated public, community, or religious cemetery, you do need to be aware of the legislation and regulations governing cemeteries.

Firstly, there is no law requiring a burial vault, however, many cemeteries have regulations that stipulate a burial liner must be used. This is largely to maintain the integrity of the ground and prevent any subsidence. Cemeteries usually have regulations that do specify the 'rules' that govern interments on their site. You should check these carefully before you commit to a plot. Check for such things as fees for opening and closing a plot, what kind of grave marker can be erected and when, and what kind of perpetual care is covered. If you should have a concern or complaint about a cemetery in Oklahoma, you can contact the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General of Oklahoma at the State Capitol, Room 112, Oklahoma City, OK 73105 Phone (405) 521-4274.

## Can I pre-plan a funeral or cremation? How does Oklahoma state law govern preneed plans?

Yes, you can pre-plan a funeral or cremation, this is generally referred to as a "preneed contract", and in many cases, it can be a good idea to pre-plan. It alleviates the surviving family of the emotional and financial burden and ensures that your explicit wishes are met.

In Oklahoma, pre-plan funeral plans are financed either through a trust fund or an insurance policy. Anyone selling preneed contracts must have obtained a permit from the State Insurance Commissioner according to statute 36 O.S. §6121. You can pre-plan and prepay funeral arrangements either for yourself or a family member.

Aside from entering into a preneed contract with a funeral home, another option is to put aside funds to cover your funeral arrangements. This can be easily done with a payable-on-death bank account where the beneficiary can quickly withdraw the funds upon death, without any need to go through probate. The most important thing is to ensure that no matter how you make plans, your family are aware of your plans, and can access the relevant paperwork at the time of need.

## What are the laws for scattering ashes in Oklahoma?

The laws pertaining to the scattering of cremated remains in Oklahoma is something that we often get asked about, and many people are unclear about. Basically, you can scatter anywhere on private land with the landowner's consent. If you wish to scatter ashes in uninhabited public rural lands, the general guidance is to scatter at least 100 feet from any road, trail, and body of water or developed facility. If you wish to scatter ashes in public parklands or a state park you may need to get a permit. State parks will require that only biodegradable containers or floral tributes be used, they will not allow any memorial marker or shrine to be placed at a scattering site.

Cremated remains are sterile, organic matter, and therefore pose no threat to the environment, so scattering ashes should be considered a safe practice. Obviously, the thing to consider is that you are scattering the mortal remains of a loved one, and once completed, there is no going back. Do not rush to scatter ashes, allow yourself time to be sure of the decision, or alternatively retain a small amount of the ashes in a keepsake container. Read our section on [Ash Scattering](#) for more guidance about how to scatter and scattering options.

### What help is available with funeral expenses in Oklahoma?

There is limited assistance available to help with funeral expenses, and it varies so much depending on your local county. Some counties do provide burial or cremation assistance and you would need to contact your county social services office to inquire. There are a few indigent and Native American burial assistance programs available in Oklahoma. A BIA Burial Assistance program serves Ottawa and Delaware counties covering final expenses for the Seneca-Cayuga tribe members. Further information is available from the Program Director Sue Channing Phone: 918-787-6803

There is a \$255 lump sum death benefit payable from the SSA if you qualify. Veterans and certain dependents are also entitled to some benefits, which include a free cemetery plot and grave marker. You would need to contact your nearest Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to find out more or talk to your funeral home. There is a VA cemetery at Fort Gibson and Fort Sill, and there is a state-run veteran cemetery in Oklahoma City.

### Are whole-body donations permitted in Oklahoma?

Yes, you can donate your body to science in Oklahoma. You can contact the State Anatomical Board on (405) 271-2424 to find out more about donating or contact the following institutions:

- Oklahoma State University's Center for Health Sciences (918) 561-8446.
- The University of Oklahoma Health Science Center (405) 271-2424, ext. # 46295

Do bear in mind that there are restrictions on the acceptance of a donation and therefore you should have an alternative option. Not all donations are accepted, and the arrangements and costs can vary between institutions.

### What do you do if your loved one dies away from Oklahoma?

If your loved one has died away from home you will need to decide fairly quickly if you wish to transport the remains back to Oklahoma, or conduct a cremation at the place of death and ship the cremated remains home. Funeral shipping can add significantly to your overall funeral expenses. Check out our section on [Funeral Shipping](#) for more detailed information.

### Where do I get a copy of a death certificate from in Oklahoma?

You can obtain a certified copy of a death certificate from the Vital Records Service at the Department of Health. You need to complete an application form, have an ID and the \$15.00 fee, and can obtain a copy by mail or in-person to:

*Vital Records Service, Room 117  
Oklahoma State Department of Health  
1000 Northeast 10th  
Oklahoma City, OK*

There are also locations at:

*James O. Goodwin Health Center  
5051 S. 129th East Ave  
Tulsa, OK 74143  
Pittsburg County Health Department  
1400 East College Avenue  
McAlester, OK*

Waiting time is about 4 weeks by mail or at least one hour in person. If you wish to apply online you will need to use the Vitalchek system. An expedited service is available upon request.

### **What should you do if you have a complaint about funeral services or products you have purchased?**

If you should have a grievance or complaint about a licensed funeral home in Oklahoma, you should attempt to resolve this with the funeral home in the first instance. If you cannot satisfactorily do this, you can make a formal written complaint to the State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors at 4545 N. Lincoln Blvd, Suite 175, Oklahoma City, OK 73105

#### **US Funerals Online Customer Support Team**

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