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CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH FUNERAL SERVICES NATIONWIDE

## Arranging a Funeral or Cremation in Wyoming

Do you need help to arrange a funeral or cremation in Wyoming? Or are you researching to pre-plan a funeral? If so, then this guide can hopefully help you. We have outlined some of the main questions that you may have about making arrangements. Such as what your consumer rights are, what costs you can expect, and what is legal with regards to Wyoming state law and licensing.

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

These days it can be difficult to choose a funeral home or cremation provider. People often consider recommendations from family, friends, or associates who have had prior experience of arranging a funeral. However, if you have no referrals, or have moved away, it can be daunting trying to select a funeral service provider.

As people are shifting more towards cremation as a disposition option, this can often mean people are seeking out new service providers. Also, the cost has become such a significant aspect of death care these days that many need to shop around to compare prices between funeral homes.

All funeral directors must be licensed and the State Board of Funeral Directors in Wyoming regulates the licensure and practice of funeral directors. The State Board's functions include the formulation of necessary rules and regulations for the proper conduct of the business or profession of funeral directing in order to safeguard the interests of the public and the standards of the profession.

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

A comprehensive directory of all the funeral homes in Wyoming is provided here on US Funerals Online. Use our Funeral Homes section to locate a list of funeral providers near to you. We list ALL funeral providers for free on our directory. If you are specifically looking for a budget cremation provider, we would suggest you visit [DFS Memorials](#). DFS Memorials is a network of local, family-owned funeral homes and crematories that offer affordable options to their local communities, and can provide a direct cremation for an affordable price. Firstly it is advisable to ensure that you are dealing with a licensed funeral director. Funeral homes should display their licenses, or you can ask for their license number. All funeral establishments are required to provide you with a General Price List (GPL) when you make any inquiries regarding the cost of their services. A GPL must state an itemized breakdown of all services and merchandise. This is in line with the federal law on the sale of funeral services and products. The funeral director also has to provide you with a Casket Price List and a price list for burial vaults by law, plus disclose information about 'cash advances', these are the upfront payments you must make for services or products that the funeral director contracts from a third party. Cash advances are usually such things as death certificates and other permits, funeral flowers, obituary notices & minister or celebrant services.

### Do you want a burial or cremation?

This is probably the first thing you need to decide upon. You obviously have to do what is right for your circumstances, taking into account the wishes of the deceased and such things as funds for funeral expenses, location of the deceased, etc. The cremation rate is around 67% in Wyoming, and harsh winters can sometimes make a cremation service a more viable option.

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

This is often the key question that many people turn to search online to find out. Unfortunately, many within the funeral profession do not believe in disclosing their prices on their websites or in advertising. The reason being that often when you ask “how much does a funeral cost”, it can be synonymous with “how long is a piece of string”...which really means “how much can you afford to spend”? It is fair to say that the cost of a funeral does vary significantly, even in the same area for equivalent services. For this reason, it is highly recommended that you shop around and compare costs.

***A direct cremation service is the least expensive and most simple cremation option. Across Wyoming, a direct cremation service usually costs between \$1,895 and \$3,000.*** It is, unfortunately, a state where cremation costs are higher than average due to the rural nature of the state and there is little competition in the market.

## Can I conduct a ‘Home funeral’ in Wyoming?

Yes, nothing in Wyoming law states that you must use the services of a funeral director. However, if the family plans not to use a funeral director but wishes to remove the body through a family member, the Department of Health will instruct the hospital not to release the body until the family files the death certificate with a local registrar and returns to the hospital with the burial (disposition) permit in hand as evidence of the family’s having filed the death certificate. This assumes the body is not dead of a contagious disease.

## Understanding cremation in Wyoming

Cremation is cheaper than a burial, which is why many are opting for it. A cremation with a service can be conducted just the same as a standard funeral service, with the body in repose, but then cremation is performed after the service as opposed to burial. This can mean that no cemetery plot, burial vault, or casket is required. A casket is not required for cremation purposes but a combustible cremation container is required. Many funeral homes will offer a rental casket for the purposes of a service or viewing. A direct cremation simply means that the deceased is collected and transferred directly to the crematory. No service is conducted before the cremation. However, a memorial service can be conducted by the family once the cremated remains are returned. This is the simplest and cheapest means of disposition today. Cremated remains can be buried in a cemetery plot or cremation garden, interred in a columbarium, kept at home, or scattered.

**There is a mandatory 24-hour waiting period in Wyoming before a cremation can be performed.** This can be waived by the county coroner if required and the coroner would need to issue the cremation permit. The burial-transit permit issued also authorizes cremation. [Statute 33-16-533]

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

As mentioned above, you can bury your loved one on your private cemetery plot, if you have one. Nothing in state law prohibits a burial on private, family property. The family should check with the local zoning or code enforcement officer. If you require a cemetery burial plot in Wyoming then it is recommended that you research in detail with the cemetery of your choice. All cemeteries have their own policies regarding specific criteria for vaults, grave liners, and grave markers. Wyoming law does NOT require that a vault is needed or indeed a casket or coffin. The Federal Funeral law states that you do NOT have to purchase a casket from your funeral director, and your funeral director CANNOT refuse to accept a casket purchased online.

Most cemeteries impose their own regulations as a standard to maintain their grounds. Vaults help to maintain the integrity of the burial plot, especially as the ground is subjected to extremes of heat and cold in the Wyoming climate. The imposition by cemeteries can also be considered another aspect of the profitability of the death care industry.

Perpetual care is the maintenance of the cemetery, including the grounds, roads, and any buildings or mausoleums. It does not usually specifically include maintenance of monuments, so you should check what provision is in place for any ongoing care for grave markers, especially if any subsidence should occur.

## What do I need to know about pre-planning a funeral or cremation?

Preplanning a funeral is a good way to save the surviving family the emotional and financial burden of a funeral. These days it can also be a wise choice when the funds allotted to a funeral plan are not taken into account if you later require senior aid and are assessed.

In Wyoming, pre-need contracts must be funded through a trust account or an escrow account, and only licensed funeral directors can sell preneed funeral contracts. Another alternative is to consult a funeral home, decide upon your needs, document your wishes, and set aside appropriate funds in a payable-on-death (POD) account or Totten Trust. This is where you identify a beneficiary who can draw the funds on your death, without the need for probate. There are also a number of online resources now for documenting your wishes so that they are accessible by family when the need arises.

## Is Embalming required by law in Wyoming?

No, embalming is NOT required by law, although if the body is being transported out-of-state or out of the U.S. embalming may be required. Some entombment mausoleums may have stipulations about embalming. A funeral director may recommend embalming if a visitation is required prior to the funeral, and although embalming may help to delay decomposition it does not prevent it completely. If you do not want to have your loved one embalmed, there is no law stipulating it, unless for public health reasons. Do not be pressurized into embalming unless it is really required due to reasons of delaying the funeral, or for viewing purposes.

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

Fortunately, you can now purchase a casket from a third-party seller. This was brought about by the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) 'funeral rule'. It gives you the right, as a consumer, to be able to purchase a casket from a source other than your funeral home. This can significantly save you costs on your overall funeral expenses. It used to be that the price for a standard casket from a funeral home could start at around \$2,500, as funeral homes added a huge mark-up to the wholesale price. But now you can purchase a standard casket for as little as \$995. We would just advise that you ensure you are dealing with a reputable casket retailer. Most reputable dealers can ship a casket anywhere within the United States on next day delivery. Your funeral home has to accept your casket and cannot add a surcharge for handling it.

## How do I obtain the death certificate and how much does it cost?

The funeral director will usually obtain the death certificate as part of his professional services. You can arrange for him to order additional copies. Or you can request further copies from the Vital Office Records at a later date. It is advisable to have more than one copy, as you will need to send off original copies in order to close the deceased's estate.

If you are not using a funeral director, you will need to file for the death certificate yourself with the local registrar. This must be done within 3 days after the death occurs. Filing for the death certificate costs \$15.00 for the first copy and \$10.00 for each additional copy.

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

As over 67% of final dispositions are cremations in Wyoming, some families choose to scatter cremated remains. Yet many people are still unsure just what laws govern their right to scatter remains. Wyoming has some beautiful rural lands making it a wonderful place to conduct an ash scattering ceremony. Cremated remains are considered sterile and are organic in nature. In fact, the phosphates that makeup part of cremains are actually a natural fertilizer.

You can legally scatter remains on private land as long as you have the permission of the landowner. There are amazing National and State Parks in Wyoming. Individuals can pursue approval by discussing their intentions with the park ranger's office of the state park site they are interested in. The park manager will need to know details such as time, date, process, and location as part of the approval process, and may approve this activity provided there are no conflicts or operational issues. Cremation ashes must be obtained after cremation by a legitimate funeral establishment.

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

Sadly, more and more people are finding themselves unable to pay for the cost of a funeral. There are benefits for veterans and their spouses to assist with a funeral. You should visit our section on veteran's funerals for more information on this. Social security does pay out \$255 for those who have worked long enough and qualify, and most local Human Services will have some allowance to help those who are most needy and have no money to cover funeral costs. This will only be minimal assistance for the most basic of services. The Department of Family Services (DFS) may offer payment assistance of \$500 or less. Contact your local county DFS for more information.

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

With a more mobile population deaths can commonly occur away from home. If a death occurs in another state you will need to make arrangements to transport the body back to Wyoming. A funeral home at the place of death will need to assist you in collecting the body and preparing it for transportation. Another option is for a cremation to be conducted at the place of death, and the cremated remains then shipped home. To learn more about what to do when a loved one dies away from home visit our [funeral shipping](#) page.

US Funerals Online offers a Travel Protection Plan that covers ALL expenses should you pass away 75 or more away from your legal residence. For those that do travel this one-time life coverage is available for just \$450. Visit our [Travel Protection Plan](#) information page.

## Are whole body donations permitted in Wyoming?

Donating a body to science is growing as a new alternative end-of-life solution. If you are interested in an anatomical gift, further information about donating a body in Wyoming can be found on our Body Donation page. Some institutions charge for the donation process, and it can take some considerable time for cremated remains to be returned to the family.

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

The Wyoming Board of Funeral Service Practitioners regulates the licensing of funeral directors. If you have a complaint regarding the services or products you have purchased from a funeral director, you can make a written complaint to the them.

Wyoming Board of Funeral Service Practitioners, 2001 Capitol Ave, Room 105, Cheyenne, WY 82002

## What happens if the deceased is at the Coroner's Office or Medical Examiners?

If the death was the result of an accident, suspicious circumstances or an 'unnatural' death at home, the county coroner will be called to collect the deceased. If required, an autopsy may need to be performed to determine the cause of death. Once this has been completed, you may arrange for a funeral director to collect the deceased from the Medical Examiner's Office. This can often mean that the funeral director can process all the county permits required for disposition at the same time.

Lincoln and Laramie County Medical Examiners are located at 310 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Cheyenne, WY.

We hope this guide has helped answer some of your questions about planning a funeral. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us.

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