



Arranging a Funeral or Cremation in Houston

Knowing what to do, and where to start, if you are faced with the task of making funeral arrangements can be daunting. There are so many decisions to be made. If this is your first experience of handling funeral arrangements, you may not know where to begin. If your loved one has just passed, or is about to pass, you may also be overwhelmed emotionally. So, we have put together this guide to arranging a funeral service or cremation service in Houston to help get you started and answer some questions.

First call: What to do when a death occurs

Once you have been informed of a death, the first thing that arises is the need to select a funeral home to handle funeral arrangements, and transfer the deceased into their care. Most people die in a medical facility, where they can be held for a short period in the hospital morgue if necessary. It can be important not to rush this decision. You need to ensure you select the right funeral service provider for your needs.

How do I choose a funeral home?

If your loved one had no funeral plan, and you have no prior experience with a funeral home, this can be a difficult task. There are over 100 funeral service locations in the Houston area. If you want to have a funeral ceremony, the actual location of the funeral home may be an important consideration. Also, if you are working to a specific financial budget for the funeral cost, you might need to make funeral price comparisons, before selecting a suitable funeral home.

What funeral service or cremation service options do I have in Houston?

With the range of funeral service locations serving Houston, you can arrange anything from a full-service traditional funeral to a simple direct cremation service. You need to decide if you want a traditional funeral, something more modern like a life celebration service, or if you wish to consider cremation. There are funeral homes serving different faiths, and funeral homes catering to the Mexican communities in Houston.

How much does a funeral cost in Houston?

The N.F.D.A* surveyed the average cost of a funeral service in 2019 at \$7,640. This is without any cemetery fees. The funeral price survey conducted by Parting (2019) puts the average cost of a traditional funeral in Houston at \$7,443.

How much does a cremation cost in Houston?

Cremation prices can be a little more difficult to quote. It depends on the type of cremation service you select. Cremation is definitely cheaper, but a cremation with a funeral ceremony, will still cost around \$4,000.

A simple cremation service with no ceremony, what is called a “direct cremation” in the funeral industry, can be arranged in Houston for as little as \$640. This is the most economical funeral service arrangement available to families.

What legal issues do I need to understand about arranging a funeral?

The legal next of kin is responsible for making funeral arrangements, unless the deceased had already made (and paid) for a funeral plan. The funeral director will generally obtain the death certificate, and may ask you how many copies you require. The fee for this is charged on top of your funeral service contract, as it is considered a third-party fee, and the funeral home have to pay this out separately.

The fee for a death certificate in Houston is \$21.00 for the first copy, and \$4.00 for each additional copy.

If you do opt for a cremation, all the legal next of kin must agree on a cremation disposition and sign the *Cremation Authorization Form*. There is also a mandatory wait period of 48-hours in Texas before a cremation can be performed. Harris County will issue a cremation permit once the mandatory period has elapsed, and all the legal paperwork is in order. Harris County charge \$25.00 to issue a cremation permit, and this will be added to your funeral bill.

Who is responsible for paying for a funeral?

If the deceased did not pre-arrange and pre-pay for a funeral plan, then the responsibility for paying for a funeral falls to the immediate next of kin. This can be quite a burden, and is why more seniors today are considering setting up simple cremation arrangements.

Pre-planning can be simple and affordable, and give family peace of mind for when the time comes. Be aware that whomever signs the funeral contract with the funeral home is considered legally responsible for payment of the funeral bill.

If you are interested in pre-arranging a simple cremation plan in Houston, contact your local DFS Memorials location on [\(713\) 309-6059](tel:7133096059).

What if the deceased is at Harris County Medical Examiner's?

If the death occurred outside of a medical facility, was an accident, or unexplained, the body will be transferred to the Medical Examiner's office in Houston. It is the responsibility of the coroner to determine a cause of death before a death certificate can be issued. You will need to arrange for a funeral home to collect your loved one once the coroner releases the body. Only a licensed funeral director can transport the deceased from the ME's morgue, and the next of kin will need to sign a release form for the Medical Examiner to release the body into the care of a funeral home.

The Medical Examiner will issue the death certificate and permit to cremate once they release the body. If you have further questions about identifying the body and making arrangements for the transfer of the deceased, you can contact Harris County on (832) 927-5006.

Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, 1861 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, TX 77030.

You can also check the status of a case online at

<https://ifs.harriscountytexas.gov/Pages/CaseStatus.aspx>

My loved one is in hospice care in Houston. How do I prepare?

If your loved one is in hospice care, and the support staff have advised you to prepare for his or her passing, it can help to have made provisional arrangements. This way when the time comes, the hospice can immediately call the funeral service provider and arrange the transfer of your loved one into their care. If you contact a funeral home ahead of time, you can have some of the preparation in place, which can make it easier when the time comes.

When provisional arrangements are in place, it can help the family and the hospice. The hospice know who to call, and the authorizations and other legal documentation can be pre-prepared, saving stress at the time of the passing of your loved one.

Is there any help with funeral expenses for low-income or uninsured families?

Harris County Community Services Department has the responsibility to assist citizens. In many cases they can refer you to a low-cost funeral service provider who works with the County. Call (713) 578-2000 to find out more.

Harris County Bereavement Program provides simple and dignified funeral services for indigents or paupers who pass in Harris County. The Program can be reached on (713) 696-1952.

What can I legally do with the cremated remains? Can I scatter the ashes in a lake in Houston?

According to the [Texas Health & Safety Code #716.304](#) cremated remains can be stored in a niche, crypt, grave or a container at home. Texas law also allows for the scattering of cremation ashes on “uninhabited public land, a public waterway or sea, or on the private property of a consenting owner.” Only biodegradable containers may be used if the ashes are to remain submerged or buried.

For an inland water scattering you may require a permit from the state agency who manages the waterway according to The Clean Water Act.

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[I want to pre-plan a simple cremation. What is the best way to set up a cremation plan in Houston?](#)

You can make pre-arrangements with a funeral home and/or crematory. Pre-need can be funded by an insurance policy in Texas. The terms and payment plans may differ depending on your requirements, age, and term for completing payment.

Some cremation providers offer online arrangement services, so all this can be done from the comfort of your own home. Pre-planning can provide you with funeral service coverage that will give you and your family peace of mind.

[Arranging a green burial in Houston](#)

According to a recent National Funeral Directors Association survey, 72% of funeral homes reported an increase in interest in green burial from families. At present, families typically have 2 options – traditional burial or cremation. A ‘natural’ green burial is less expensive than a traditional burial, and more environmentally-friendly than a cremation.

Visit our guide to green burial in Texas to find out more about green burial service providers located in Texas and natural burial grounds.

[How do I obtain copies of a death certificate?](#)

The funeral director will generally file for the death certificate for you, and will ask how many copies you require. The first death certificate costs \$20.00. Each additional copy (ordered at the same time) is charged at \$3.00 each.

If you need to request additional copies at a later date, these can be ordered from the vital records of Texas Department of State Health Services. You can order online, or in person at a local vital records office. More information is available on the [Texas DSHS website](#).

[What is no-cost cremation?](#)

A “no-cost” cremation generally refers to a whole body donation program where the deceased’s remains are cremated free of charge after the donation. The University of Texas offer a [‘Willed Body Donor Program’](#) through McGovern Medical School.

[I need to send my loved one to Mexico. What repatriation options do I have?](#)

If a loved one dies in Houston and you wish to have the body returned to Mexico, you can arrange ground transportation at an affordable cost. A funeral service can be held for family

and friends in Houston, before the remains are returned to Mexico for interment.

Call Juan on [\(844\) 851-6162](tel:844-851-6162) for immediate assistance with repatriation to Mexico

Can I have a private viewing before a simple cremation?

Yes, it is possible to arrange for a private 'goodbye' viewing before a direct cremation. However, this often depends upon the availability of facilities, staff and scheduling. Sometimes, it can be arranged at no additional cost, but there may be a fee to offer a private viewing if additional staff and transfer of the deceased are required.

Do I need a casket for a cremation service?

No, there is no requirement (or law) that stipulates a casket is needed for a cremation service. A simple cremation is usually conducted using a simple reinforced cardboard container. It is possible to rent a casket if you wish to have a service before the cremation. This can help you save on funeral costs.

I have questions, or concerns, about arranging a funeral in Houston. Where can I find help?

You can contact our DFS Memorials affordable funeral service provider in Houston with any questions you have. They have a bilingual team ready to assist you. Services offered include: traditional funeral, cremation funeral, lowest cost direct cremation, preplan funeral and cremation services, funeral shipping and repatriation to Mexico and other international destinations.

US Funerals Online Customer Support Team

Email : help@us-funerals.com

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