

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO FUNERAL SERVICE

What do funeral directors do? Why do we need them?

Funeral directors are caregivers and administrators. They make the arrangements for transportation of the body, complete all necessary paperwork and implement the choices made by the family regarding the funeral and final disposition of the body.

Funeral directors have experience assisting the bereaved in coping with death and are trained to answer questions about grief, recognize when a person is having difficulty coping and recommend sources of professional help.

How do people select a funeral director?

In most communities, the funeral director is almost always chosen on the basis of reputation. It is best to visit the funeral home and to talk with the funeral director in person when time allows. This allows you to examine the facilities, ask questions about prices and understand the ways in which you will be served. Comfort and rapport are key factors in the final decision.

Are you required to have a funeral director to bury the dead?

No law in Colorado prevents family members from burying their own dead as long as filing and documentation requirements are met. However, most people find it very trying to be solely responsible for arranging the details and legal matters surrounding a death, while at the same time attempting to deal with the realities of a loss of a loved one.

What is the purpose of embalming?

Embalming preserves the body, retards the decomposition process and enhances the appearance of a body disfigured by traumatic death or illness.

Embalming makes it possible to lengthen the time between death and the final disposition, thus allowing family members time to arrange and participate in the type of service most comforting to them.

Does a body have to be embalmed, according to Colorado law?

No. Colorado however, requires embalming within 24 hours after death and requires embalming when remains are to be transported out of state by common carrier.

Why have a public viewing of the deceased?

Viewing is part of many cultural and ethnic traditions. Many grief specialists believe that viewing aids the grief process by helping the bereaved recognize the reality of death. Viewing is encouraged for children, as long as the process is explained and the activity is voluntary.

How much does a funeral cost?

The National Funeral Director's Association estimates that in 2002, the average charge for an adult, full service funeral was about \$5500.00.

Vault, cemetery and monument charges are additional and may add less than \$500.00 to up to several thousand dollars to the total cost.

When do I find out what the total funeral will cost?

The funeral director must give you a summary of your selection before you leave the funeral home after making arrangements and he must sign it. Where transportation charges are not known in cases of transfers between cities, an estimate should be provided.

Is cremation a substitute for a funeral?

No, cremation is an alternative to earth burial or entombment for the body's final disposition and often follows a traditional funeral service.

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