

1. First and Foremost: Do Not Rush to final disposition. Rushing through the process may not be in the best interest of the family and friends! I strongly believe that we should take our time and not rush toward final disposition. By allowing more time between death and final disposition it will allow family members and friends time to plan schedules, travel, gather and mourn together.

2. Viewing of the body provides the family and friends with the confrontation that death has in fact occurred - seeing is believing.

By extending the hours published for the visitation period it will allow more friends the ability to fit it into their busy schedule so they can attend and pay their respects. In many cases a 2 hour visitation period does not allow enough time for friends to attend.

3. Without viewing it can be difficult for the family and friends to persuade their own mind that their loved one or close friend is dead. The mind set of denial can cause a person to continually expect their deceased loved one to someday "just walk through the door."

4. Viewing the body is a very special time that allows the family and friends to begin the transition into their new life. That new life is continuing to live onward without the presence of their loved one.

5. The Visitation or Viewing time is a very important time since it allows the family and friends to say goodbye to the deceased in their own personal way. During this time the family members and friends that gather can support each other with the grieving

process. It is a time for remembering, expressing love, sharing tears, and even laughter along with condolences by all who attend.

6. Regardless of the method chosen for final disposition of the body a public visitation can be of great help to family and friends in dealing with the grieving and mourning process. Viewing of the body should always be considered before final disposition.

7. Open casket viewing is THE Most Personalized part of any funeral ritual or ceremony. Not having the body present at a funeral ceremony or ritual is like having a wedding ceremony without the bride or groom being present.

The information below has been provided to assist you and your family with understanding the benefits of selecting embalming, restorative procedures, and viewing and visitation periods for your loved one. Please understand that your funeral home respects and fully supports the choices you make regarding final disposition of your loved one. Any funeral home will be glad to discuss in-depth various options available to you and your family. The funeral home is there to serve you.

Embalming defined: As the process of chemically treating the dead human body to reduce the presence and growth of microorganisms, to temporarily inhibit organic decomposition, and to restore an acceptable physical appearance.

About Embalming

Embalming is not required by law however under certain circumstances it may be required or **considered the most desirable method for preparation of the body. It is well known throughout funeral professionals that embalming is the most desirable method to prepare the body in order to achieve an opportunity to present the body for viewing by the family and friends.** Contrary to what some individuals may believe embalming is not an archaic or gruesome procedure. One should understand that there are many variables to the embalming and restorative procedures. Things such as, but not limited to, the presence of disease and trauma may alter the procedures performed by the embalmer. To enable you to better understand the process I have briefly listed the basic procedures below.

- The body is bathed; features such as eyelids and the mouth are positioned closed.
- To accomplish the injection process the embalmer will make an incision or incisions to gain access to an artery or arteries. An incision is made in an artery and a small tube is inserted into it.
- The embalmer will then mix the appropriate amount of preservative chemical into an embalming machine. The preservative chemical is injected under pressure into the arterial system. As the preservative chemical is injected into the artery a pressure, similar to living blood pressure, is built up in the vascular system and a vein will be opened to allow the escape of the majority of blood volume from the body.
- The essence of the process termed arterial embalming is to replace the majority of the blood volume with a preservative and disinfectant chemical.
- Following the injection into the arteries it is necessary for the embalmer to further preserve the internal organs. This procedure is performed by making a small incision in the abdominal wall and inserting a pointed hollow tube called a trocar. This tube will be inserted into the various organs and the gases and fluids will be withdrawn from the body. This process is called aspiration.
- Upon completion of the aspiration process of the cavities a preservative chemical will be injected into the internal organs and the small incision closed and sealed.
- Other procedures and care will be performed to make the body ready for viewing such as, but not limited to, fixing hair, make up application and dressing the body in attire selected by the family.

Restorative or Reconstructive Surgery Procedures:

Following a natural death the restorative measures may involve basic care procedures associated with embalming. However when death from severe disfiguring trauma has occurred it may be necessary for the embalmer to perform a variety of additional procedures, similar to plastic surgeons, in order to achieve an acceptable and identifiable body. Disfiguring injuries can occur during different types of fatal incidents. When these deaths are investigated by appropriate officials the family might be told that due to the condition of the body it is not viewable. Typically physicians, coroner's and law enforcement personnel are not qualified to make the determination whether a body can be reconstructed for viewing purposes. Often these officials are not aware that an embalmer may be able to restore the body to a viewable state. There are also embalmers that specialize in reconstructive surgery that can be called in to the funeral home. These specialists have advanced training and can reconstruct some of

the most severe traumatic injuries. Families should always consult with the funeral home embalmer to make that determination and may wish to seek a second opinion.

Benefits of Embalming and Restorative Procedures:

- Delays the natural process of body decomposition
- Allows for delayed final disposition
- Allows additional time for family members and friends to travel and gather together
- Allows additional time for viewing and ceremonies with the body present
- Allows additional time for reconstructive procedures, if necessary, to restore the body to a more acceptable and identifiable condition for viewing by family and friends
- Typically provides an additional comfort for the family and friends enabling them to see their loved one

Frequently asked questions:

If we cremate do we need embalming or restorative procedures? Why is it important to have a final viewing of my loved one following a natural death or severe traumatic death?

Regardless of the method you choose for final disposition we believe that one should consider the benefits of embalming, restorative procedures, viewing and ceremonies. These can be accomplished and then final disposition occur. Remember that cremation is only one method of final disposition and it should be clearly understood that once the cremation process occurs the opportunity to view the body is forever gone.

Why is it important to have a final viewing of my loved one following a natural death or severe traumatic death?

Before deciding whether to view or not to view your loved one before final disposition carefully consider:

- Your loved one only dies once and your family has only this one opportunity to make selections and decisions. Carefully think it through and make choices that will be appropriate and comforting for you, your family and your loved ones close friends.
- The psychological needs of the family members and close friends of the deceased.
- Having the body present with the casket open is the most personalized way to honor your loved one
- From infancy all of us are taught that it is proper to say Hello and Goodbye.

- Viewing allows each family member and friend an opportunity to say goodbye in their own special way.
- Viewing allows the family and friends time to share grief. It has been said that grief shared is grief diminished.
- Viewing allows the family and friends time to begin the transition of life with the loved one into a life without the presence of that loved one
- Viewing is a confrontation of the death. It helps to confirm the reality that death has occurred and helps to eliminate the later thoughts in one's mind that he or she will just walk through the door. One should remember that -seeing is believing.
- Viewing, visitation or wake periods provide an opportunity to share grief with family and friends and to reminisce about how the deceased has touched lives. This special time can provide support for those grieving.
- Viewing allows a direct point of contact time with your loved one before final disposition.
- Viewing can be the beginning of a celebration of the life of your loved one and a recognition of the significance of that person to all who attend