

7

Step Guide to
Planning an

ABSOLUTELY STRESS-FREE

Cremation

If you are looking to spare your loved ones from emotional and financial strain in the future, this is an essential read.



7 Step Guide to Planning an **ABSOLUTELY STRESS-FREE** Cremation

When it comes to cremation, there are a lot of decisions to be made. Whether you are pre-planning for yourself or making arrangements for a loved one who has passed, understanding the process and options can help you make informed choices. From choosing a cremation provider to deciding what to do with the cremated remains, there are a variety of factors to consider. This guide will provide an overview of important details to keep in mind when planning a cremation.

Step 1: Choosing a Cremation Provider

Choosing a cremation provider is an important decision that requires careful consideration. Here are a few tips to help you select the best cremation provider:

1. **Research:** Look online for local cremation providers and read reviews from other families who have used their services. You can also ask friends or family members for referrals.
2. **Crematory:** Ask if they own and operate their own crematory. Just as you would not eat at a restaurant without a kitchen, you should not choose a cremation provider who doesn't operate their own crematory.
3. **Costs:** Compare prices and be sure to ask for a detailed cost breakdown of all services provided.
4. **Facilities:** Visit the provider's facilities to ensure that they have the proper equipment and facilities to provide quality services.
5. **Staff:** Make sure the staff is knowledgeable, professional, and compassionate. You want a provider that will guide you through the process with care and sensitivity.

Step 2: Who is Responsible for Making Cremation Arrangements

Washington State law makes this very clear who enjoys the right to control disposition. Per RCW 68.50.160, there is a prescribed order in terms of next of kin of highest legal standing. If there have been no pre-recorded plans memorialized in a will or power of attorney, primary right to control disposition falls to the surviving spouse. If there is no spouse, then it falls to the majority of surviving adult children. If there are no surviving adult children, then it falls to the surviving parents. If there are no surviving parents, then it falls to a majority of the surviving siblings. If there are no surviving siblings, then it falls to a court-appointed guardian for the person at the time of the person's death.

Step 3: Decide on the Type of Cremation

The difference between flame and water cremation, also known as aquamation, is primarily in the method of disposition of the body. Flame cremation, as the name suggests, involves using intense heat generated by burning gases to reduce the body to ash. It typically takes one to three hours to complete the process. Water cremation or aquamation, on the other hand, involves using a process called alkaline hydrolysis to dissolve the body in water, alkaline solution and pressure. It typically takes three to six hours to complete the process. The ashes from either process can then be placed in an urn or scattered according to the family's wishes.

Step 4: Determine How Long the Cremation Process Will Take

The amount of time it takes for a cremation to be completed can vary depending on a number of factors, including the type of cremation equipment used, the size of the body being cremated, and the quality of the equipment. In general, a cremation can take anywhere from 1 to 3 hours to complete. However, some crematories may require additional time for preparation, cooling, and other activities that may delay the process. It is important to note that while a cremation may only take hours to complete, the process of making arrangements, obtaining necessary permits and certificates, and coordinating with the funeral home or crematorium can take several days to a week or more. So, the entire process of planning and carrying out a cremation can take several days to several weeks from start to finish. If a potential cremation provider says it will take over two to four weeks to perform the cremation then you should select another company to assist your family.

Step 5: How to Prepare for the Arrangement Conference

First of all, the cremation provider you select should have your convenience in mind. They should offer you in-person, telephone or online arrangement options. When you come in for an in-person arrangement, the funeral director will present options for you and your families' consideration. It should be conversational and you should feel no pressure at all to buy one option over another. The funeral director will ask you vital statistics questions so that the death certificate for your loved one can be completed and filed with the health department. Next will be to have the next of kin of highest legal standing sign off on the authorization for cremation. Then the various cremation options will be presented such as cremation with a ceremony, a private viewing before the cremation or cremation with no viewing or services.

Step 6: Financial and Payment Options

It is customary for a cremation provider to expect your account to be closed out at the conclusion of the arrangement conference. A cremation provider should offer a wide array of payment options to make it easier for families to pay for the cremation. Losing a loved one can be a difficult time emotionally and financially, and the expenses associated with a cremation can add to the financial burden. By offering payment options such as payment plans, credit card payments, and financing, a cremation provider can help families manage the costs of a cremation and alleviate some of their financial stress. Additionally, offering multiple

payment options can help the cremation provider attract business from a wider range of customers, including those who may not have the ability to pay for cremation expenses upfront.

Step 7: Decide on What Will Happen With the Cremated Remains

There are several options for what to do with an urn once the cremation is complete. Here are some of the most common:

1. **Keep the urn at home:** Many people choose to keep the urn containing their loved one's remains at home. This allows them to have a physical reminder of their loved one's presence and may provide comfort.
2. **Burial:** The urn can be buried in a cemetery or other designated burial site. Some cemeteries have specific areas set aside for urns.
3. **Scattering:** The ashes can be scattered in a location that was meaningful to the deceased, such as a favorite park or beach. It is important to check local regulations before scattering ashes, as some areas have specific laws governing the scattering of ashes.
4. **Columbarium:** A columbarium is a structure designed to hold urns. In some cases, a plaque or marker can be added to the columbarium to commemorate the deceased.
5. **Shared memento:** Some people choose to have a small portion of the ashes placed in keepsake urns, jewelry or other items that can be worn or displayed. This allows family members or friends to have a memento of their loved one.
6. **Memorialization:** People may choose to set up a memorial in honor of their loved one. This could be a physical memorial such as a bench or statue, or a virtual one such as a webpage or social media group.

Conclusion

You are well on your way to planning for a successful cremation for your loved one. We sincerely hope this free guide has been useful to you as you make these difficult decisions. The easiest way forward is to move forward with a trusted cremation provider to properly care for your loved one and your family.

