



## Why Choose Cremation?

Cremation has become a preferred choice for many people. Nearly half of Americans choose cremation over traditional burials for several reasons including:

*Simplicity* – Cremation is simple, yet very practical. It allows for flexibility in arranging gatherings to mourn or celebrate the lives of those who have passed away. Unlike traditional burials, cremation memorial services and end-of-life celebrations can be held at any time.

*Individualized* – Cremation allows each person to express his/her individuality by choosing memorialization, special ceremony or scattering of ashes in a cherished place.

*Economics* – Cremation is far more economical than a traditional burial, costing as little as a fourth the cost of a traditional burial.

*Environment* – Cremation is better for the environment. There are no chemicals used for embalming; nor the need for perpetual maintenance of the grounds at the cemetery.

### Commonly Asked Questions

**Are there rules regarding sales of cremation services?** Laws do vary from state to state; however there are some consistent regulations concerning preparation, transportation and disposition of remains. Service providers will assist the family in obtaining death certificates and any required permits for burial or cremation. That is why it is critical for families or trusted advisors to have immediate access to important paperwork such as military service records, Social Security number and proof of entitlement to union benefits. Since state regulations govern what is required, much of what you must typically purchase as part of cremation is not optional.

**Will my religion allow it?** Many religious restrictions are being relaxed or eliminated entirely, thus allowing more people to choose cremation. In 1983, cremation was no longer forbidden by the Code of Canon Law for people of the Catholic faith. There is diverse opinion among the Protestant churches, but most denominations concede that the scriptures don't specifically address cremation. More and more churches are leaving these personal decisions to the individuals who are making pre-planning arrangements and to the families who have lost loved ones.

**Won't my will express my wishes?** In many instances, a will is not read until the deceased's arrangements have taken place. Relying on a will to express your final arrangement wishes is risky. Chances are what is stated in your will and what actually happens may not be the same. Pre-planning is important because it ensures everything is in place before death occurs.





**Why think about final arrangement planning now?** Sadly, many deaths occur without any warning. Pre-planning protects your loved ones from unnecessary stress and helps bring peace of mind. You spare them from facing confusing choices and difficult decisions during a time of great personal loss.

Preplanning gives you a choice in how you want to be remembered. You can make the important decisions now so others will not have to during an emotionally-painful time. When you make decisions in advance, you allow survivors to find needed solace in the support of each other: to grieve their loss; celebrate your life.

**What details should I be thinking about for my service?** There are many details to consider for a funeral service including:

*Location* – Possibilities include a house of worship, restaurant or family home.

*Timing* – Unless a religious doctrine dictates the timing, considerations may include scheduling at the facility of your choice, with allowances made for travel time so loved ones who live far away can attend. For a visitation or wake, you may want to establish calling hours.

*Guests* – Create a list of people you want to attend the service, including family, friends, business associates and co-workers. Include people that you want to be notified even if they can't physically attend the service.

*Products/Services* – Items to consider include a register book, prayer cards and thank-you notes for visitors and attendees of the service.

*Personal Details* –Consider the type of music, reading passages, mementos of the deceased, flowers or gifts to a favorite cause you might want to incorporate into the service.

*Obituary* – Determine how you want your life remembered. Write down how you would like your obituary to read and if there are special places or newspapers to submit the information.

Let those who will be making decisions about your service know in advance so you can express your wishes. To help you communicate your wishes, download Reflection Pointe Gardens final planning guide.





**Can I plan a farewell ceremony or memorial with cremation?** Because cremation has no geographical borders or boundaries, it allows flexibility to express life in very personal ways. If you would like to incorporate some type of farewell event that captures your unique spirit and the way you live and view life, speak to your service provider and loved ones about your wishes to make sure they can be carried out.

**How should I select a reputable service provider?** If you do not know who you would like to select, research the service provider's reputation. Ask a neighbor, coworker or friend in the community for a reference. Ask about sensitivity to personal needs, attention to detail, and ability to provide the quality of services you expect. Then visit with the service provider. Talking with a service provider will usually give you a good sense of whether the facility and staff are right for your family's needs, style and values. Feel free to discuss costs and how they handle billing.

**What is the cost?** Cremation is far more economical than a traditional burial, costing as little as a fourth the cost of a traditional burial. Service providers tend to offer both individual per-item or per-service pricing and package pricing. Ask your service provider for a general price lists for all services and merchandise.

**What happens when a death occurs?** These steps may vary between states, but the basic process is the same. If a plan has been pre-arranged, most likely the deceased will have a document with the name and phone number of the cremation service provider. They also may have provided their closest family member or friends with this information.

**What documents and signatures are needed?** A death certificate is required by law, and is completed by the service provider with the necessary information provided by the family. Permits for cremation cannot be obtained until the medical authorities provide these signatures. This certificate will be delivered to the physician and medical examiner for the listing of the official cause of death and the required legal signatures. Realize that cremation service providers have no control over the length of time necessary for these signatures to be obtained. Autopsies and medical records may delay signatures by physicians and medical examiners. Timing depends on whether or not the death certificate is coming from the doctor, the medical examiner or the VA Hospital. In some states it may take longer than 10 days: it depends upon how long doctors have to sign the death certificate and medical examiners to approve it.

