



## Arranging a Funeral or Cremation in Alabama

This guide aims to answer some of the key questions you may have as you start making funeral arrangements. Aside from having a directory of funeral homes in Alabama, we have put together an overview of some of the legal aspects of making funeral plans specific to Alabama funeral laws.

### Finding funeral homes in Alabama

If you need to arrange a funeral or cremation in Alabama, the first thing you may be considering doing is finding a local funeral home or cremation provider. There are 655 listed funeral and cremation businesses in Alabama, so you need to decide upon a few factors that can help you select the right provider for you. These can be such things as whether you require a burial or a cremation, what kind of service you require, if you want a traditional service or a more contemporary life celebration event, and most importantly – what kind of budget you have for the cost of the funeral.

### Funeral costs and cremation costs in Alabama

The most important question many people want to know today is “how much does a funeral cost?” The cost of a traditional funeral has been steadily increasing for a number of years now, and the average funeral today can cost around \$10,000 in total. However, more folks are demanding cheaper funeral options. Not only can many families not afford this kind of outlay, more still are just electing to save this money on funeral costs to spend elsewhere.

### Alabama cremation services

Although burial is still the preferred funeral choice in Alabama, cremation services are steadily growing in popularity. One of the main reasons for this is the cost of cremation services. A cremation can cost a fifth of the cost of a traditional funeral in Alabama. A cremation eliminates the need for some of the most expensive funeral service items – such as a casket, embalming, burial vault and the cemetery charges. This alone can immediately half the cost of a funeral. A cremation with a memorial service can be arranged very similar to a burial service, only the deceased is cremated after the memorial service.

Arranging a direct cremation not only offers the most affordable funeral in Alabama, it can also mean that a memorial service can be conducted at a later date/time to suit the family. In fact, many families are choosing to use a funeral home to conduct the immediate cremation and then arranging memorial services or an ash scattering ceremony themselves.

### Affordable cremation services in Alabama

If the funeral costs are a concern to you, seek out a funeral home or crematory in Alabama who specialize in offering low cost cremation services. Do be aware that the cost of a cremation can vary significantly between funeral homes. The DFS Memorials network of low cost cremation providers all offer a simple and affordable direct cremation service. Prices vary, depending upon your location, but range between \$895 and \$1,195.

#### **DFS Memorials Affordable Cremation Services in Alabama**

Birmingham (205) 206-7785 Direct Cremation \$895  
Mobile (251) 206-5572 Direct Cremation \$1,195  
Montgomery (334) 231-3191 Direct Cremation \$1,095  
Huntsville (256) 269-2255 Direct Cremation \$1,095

## Comparing Alabama cremation costs and services – a breakdown of funeral costs

Shopping around between funeral homes in Alabama and comparing funeral services and costs is essential. What you will discover is that the prices for the same funeral service or cremation service will differ. It can depend upon which area of Alabama you live in, and the type and number of funeral homes in your area. For example, if you have a number of full service traditional funeral homes, or corporate owned funeral homes, you may find the funeral prices are higher. Where there is a funeral home offering discounted cremation services, then the cremation price generally becomes more competitive. Do bear in mind that a low cost cremation provider, offering direct cremations in Alabama, may be prepared to service a wider geographical area.

A traditional funeral can be purchased for \$5,000 in Alabama if you shop around and find an affordable funeral home. This price includes a casket but does not include cemetery fees.

## Alternative funeral options in Alabama – Life Celebrations, Green Funerals & Home Funerals

The ritual of the traditional funeral in Alabama is changing. We are moving into an era where celebration and memorialization are changing the way funeral homes conduct a send-off. Funeral services need not even be held in a funeral home or church these days. As we become more ecologically minded, more folks are even returning to the notion of natural, green burial and home funerals and some families chose to bury on their own land. It is legal in Alabama to conduct a home funeral, you do NOT have to legally employ a funeral director. You would need to file for the death certificate and obtain a burial or cremation permit from the county offices.

## What you need to know – Funeral laws, regulation and licensing in Alabama

All states have different laws when it comes to funeral practice and licensing. The Alabama Board of Funeral Service license funeral homes in Alabama. If for any reason you have a concern or complaint about a licensed funeral home you can contact them at: Alabama Board of Funeral Service, PO. Box 309522, Montgomery, AL 36130 Phone: 334-242-4049

## Does the deceased have to be embalmed in Alabama?

No there is no legal requirement or law that stipulates a body has to be embalmed. However, some funeral homes do implement policies that require a body to be embalmed if a viewing or open casket service is being conducted.

## What you need to know about cremation laws in Alabama

As the cremation rate is growing in Alabama, more folks are asking about the laws and regulations that govern human cremation. Firstly, let me state that there are strict rules about how a human cremation can be performed. Only 1 person can be cremated at once, and the cremation retort must be cleared before the next cremation. A Cremation Authorization Form MUST be signed by the immediate next of kin for a cremation to go ahead. If there is any dispute about this then a cremation cannot proceed.

## Finding a low cost cremation provider in Alabama

The coroner will issue a permit to cremate and once the funeral director has this, he can proceed with the cremation. At present there is no charge for a cremation permit in Alabama. There is no legislated mandatory waiting period before a cremation in Alabama, however, it generally takes 3 days or so to gather the necessary paperwork and authorizations. An expedited cremation can be arranged if required.

No casket is required. A suitable cremation container is used (generally a reinforced cardboard box) and some funeral homes offer rental caskets should you require a service or viewing beforehand.

## What can we do with the cremated remains? Laws for ash scattering in Alabama.

As more families choose cremation, we are asked more often “what can I legally do with the cremation ashes?” There is a growing interest in the activity of scattering ashes as opposed to interring them, or keeping them at home. You can choose to scatter them in a designated scattering memorial garden, inter them in a cremation niche, keep them in the cremation urn or distribute them between family in keepsake urns. There are a whole plethora of options for how you can memorialize cremated remains today – from creating diamonds, shotgun pellets, cement garden ornaments and cremation portraits.

Cremation does render ashes harmless, so there is no public health risk involved in scattering ashes. They are basically sterile, organic matter but use common sense and refrain from scattering ashes in places where they would be obvious, or offensive, to others.

Scattering on private land requires the landowners consent, and it is wise to check local ordinance zoning if you wish to scatter on public lands. If you wish to scatter ashes in a state park, you should check if the park in question has any rules about permits required for ash-scattering.

If you wish to scatter off the gulf coast or out of Mobile Bay you need to bear in mind EPA regulations. A burial at sea should be 3 nautical miles out and a written notification provided to the local EPA representative within 30 days.

Burial At Sea Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, 61 Forsyth Street Southwest, Atlanta, GA 30303 Phone: (404) 562-9395

## Who is responsible for paying for the funeral?

There are 2 alternatives – either you preplan and prepay for your own funeral expenses, or surviving family will become liable for your disposition costs. You do not have to formally set up a funeral contract with a funeral service provider, but can make adequate provision by putting funds aside in a POD account in order that the person who will arrange your funeral can access this fund immediately upon the death. You can read more about this in [‘What is my best and safest option for putting aside money for a funeral?’](#)

## Purchasing a casket or grave marker in Alabama

A casket and memorial headstone can be two of most expensive funeral merchandise items purchased for a funeral. It is important to understand that you do NOT have to purchase a casket from a funeral home. The Federal Trade Commission’s ‘funeral rule’ means that you legally have the right to purchase a casket elsewhere and your funeral home must accept it. Caskets can often be purchased from a third-party retailer at a fraction of the cost that some funeral homes retail them for! Check out our [‘Casket’](#) section for more

detailed information about purchasing a casket. Similarly a grave marker does not have to be purchased at the time of interment. Generally cemeteries will not permit a memorial marker to be erected until a few months after the burial. This gives the ground a chance to settle and prevents potential subsidence of the monument. Therefore, this gives you time to shop around without feeling you have to commit to a marker whilst making funeral arrangements. Check out our [‘Grave Markers’](#) section for a much more detailed overview of purchasing and erecting a memorial monument.

## What discounts are there for Veteran’s funerals in Alabama?

All veterans (& some dependents) are entitled to a free cemetery plot, grave marker and US Flag. A copy of the DD214 discharge papers would be required to obtain any veteran’s benefits. Some funeral homes do offer additional discounts for veteran’s funerals, so you would need to make inquiries. The DFS Memorials provider in Mobile offers a \$200 discount off a burial and a \$100 discount off the cost of a cremation. The veteran’s cemetery in Mobile is now closed to interments but Montevallo and Fort Mitchell both have space.

### [A death has occurred away from my home state. What do I do?](#)

With a more transient population, this eventuality is happening more often. If a loved one has died away from Alabama, or needs transporting back to a home state/country, you will need to consider the services of a mortuary shipper. Transporting a body (either domestically or internationally) can work out costly. There are rigid rules to be met, and in the case of international ship-outs, consulate and customs paperwork to be completed. You need a funeral director at the location of the death and where the body is being shipped to coordinate the funeral shipping process. For this reason, families will sometimes decide to arrange a cremation at the location of death and transport the cremated remains. This can work out much simpler and significantly less expensive. Check out our section on [Funeral Shipping](#)

### [I wish to donate my body to science when I die. Can I do this in Alabama?](#)

Absolutely! An anatomical gift as a body donation is called is a great way to gift something back to society upon your death. Another great benefit is that it can reduce (or remove) any funeral costs. Most body donation organizations offer a free cremation as part of the donation process. There are some conditions though when a body may not be accepted, so it is wise to pre-register, and to also have an alternative plan in place. There are several nationwide donation programs with a commitment to return the cremated remains to the family within 4 – 6 weeks.

### [The deceased had no life insurance and I can't afford a funeral. What help is there with cremation costs in Alabama?](#)

Sadly more families are finding themselves in such a situation. The reality is that there is very limited public or state assistance for funeral costs. The state takes care of any indigent deaths (as is their responsibility) but this is done by the means of a pauper burial or cremation. Social Security offer a \$255 death benefit payment (if qualifying) and the funeral director will assist you with claiming this. For some further guidance read our article '[What do I do if I Can't Afford a Funeral](#)'?

### [How do I get a copy of the death certificate?](#)

The funeral director will file the death certificate. In Alabama, a death must be registered with the local office of vital statistics within 5 days and a body may not be buried or cremated until the death certificate is filed. (Alabama Code § 22-9A-14(a).) You will need certified copies to formally register the death of the deceased with government institutions, banks and insurance companies, etc. You can order certified copies of a death certificate from Alabama Department of Public Health. You can do this online, by phone, by mail or in person. The first certified copy of a death certificate costs \$15 and additional copies are \$6 each. There is an extra fee if you use the online ordering system.

### [What steps do I need to take when a death has occurred?](#)

If you are choosing to use the services of a funeral director, you need to select a funeral services provider to work with. He/she will be able to help walk you through the next steps once they have the deceased in their care. Visit our article '[How to Save Money Arranging a Funeral or Cremation](#)' for detailed tips to save money and checklists to help you make preparations.

The Internet provides a great tool today by which you can anonymously conduct funeral research and make informed funeral decisions. If you wish to read further information about arranging a funeral or cremation you can check out our Library/Info section. If you need immediate assistance and have not found what you are looking for – please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to try and help you.

**If you require further assistance with planning a funeral, or have a question that this guide has not answered, you can contact our Funeral Adviser for help.**

Phone: (877) 225-0834

Email: [help@us-funerals.com](mailto:help@us-funerals.com)

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