



USFuneralsOnline
CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH FUNERAL SERVICES NATIONWIDE

Arranging a Funeral or Cremation in Arizona

Are you facing the difficult task of organizing a funeral? This brief guide aims to outline some of the main points, and Arizona state laws, which will help you start the process. It can be an extremely daunting task to make funeral arrangements, especially if this is the first time you have had to do it and you are coping with your bereavement at the same time.

There are around 190 funeral homes and cremation providers in the state of Arizona, with the three main areas being Phoenix, Mesa and Tucson.

How do you choose which funeral home or cremation provider is right for your needs?

Choosing the right funeral provider is perhaps the most important decision to make at first. With so many funeral homes to choose from, it can be difficult knowing where to start. It is advisable to talk to family and friends to get recommendations. However, you may not have a recommendation, or may need different funeral services, or even just want to compare funeral services and costs. As funeral prices do vary quite significantly between different funeral homes, it is always advisable to consult more than one funeral home for equivalent prices.

The Arizona State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers publishes a '*Consumer Guide to Arizona Funerals Information*' pamphlet that state law requires your funeral establishment to issue to you. It gives you a general outline and clearly states your rights as a consumer when purchasing funeral products and services. According to Arizona law only an "authorizing agent" can make funeral arrangements. This agent should be a spouse, next of kin, or a person identified in a healthcare power of attorney. If the deceased was legally separated from his/her spouse, or in petition for a divorce, the spouse cannot be the authorizing agent.

How do I find a funeral home or cremation provider in Arizona?

There are several directories that list funeral homes and cremation providers in Arizona. US Funerals Online is one of the oldest and most comprehensive dedicated funeral home directory. We offer a FREE listing to ALL funeral homes and cremation providers, so every funeral business in your area should be listed by city and in zip code order, making it exceptionally easy to locate your local funeral service providers. Visit our directory pages and use the drop-down list to locate your city.

DFS Memorials affordable cremation service (602) 638-1151
Direct cremation service \$725

Do you want a burial or cremation?

It may help you in deciding who is the right funeral provider for you to know what kind of services you are requiring. Different funeral homes often have greater experience and skills in different services. Do you want a burial or a cremation? Do you want a full-service funeral and require a location that can offer visitation and a chapel for a service? Or are you looking for a cremation? Arizona has a higher than average cremation rate at over 60%, so the number of funeral homes offering cremation services is quite extensive. Before you start contacting funeral directors, it can be useful to write down exactly what you require, so as not to be confused when making inquiries. You may find the tips and checklist on our 'Planning Ahead' page useful. Cremation is by far the cheaper option when arranging a disposition. It removes the need for many of the most expensive elements such as a casket, burial vault, cemetery plot and grave marker.

What is the cost of a funeral or cremation in Arizona?

This is the question that most people are seeking out online these days. As savvy consumers in an Internet world, we shop around to find the best deals, and we expect to compare prices. Purchasing funeral and cremation services these days is no different. Unfortunately, not all

funeral homes openly disclose prices.

A local family-owned funeral business is likely to offer you the best deal, but it is not always obvious who these are. Service Corporation International (SCI) operates a number of funeral and cremation brands in Arizona and you should be aware that you are dealing with a large corporate chain. These brands are Dignity Memorial, Neptune Society, National Cremation Society and Advantage Funeral and Cremation Services.

Arizona state law requires that the funeral establishment does provide you with a general price list (GPL), a casket price list and an outer burial container price list when you consult with them about funeral costs.

If you proceed to contract their services, they must provide you with a '*statement of funeral goods and services*' listing all your selected services and products. Do check your contract very carefully before you sign it, as once you have signed it you are obligated to pay for the services requested. Do note that certain items you request, that are often provided by a third-party, are referred to as 'cash advances', and these must be paid for upfront. These include such things as flowers, obituary notices, death certificates & celebrants.

What do I need to understand about cremation laws in Arizona?

Each state has its own legislation that governs funeral practice. A crematory must abide by certain practice standards in disposing of human remains by cremation. In Arizona a cremation can only be performed once a 'Cremation Authorization Form' has been signed by the legal next of kin and the coroner has issued the cremation permit. There is a mandatory waiting period of 24 hours before a cremation can proceed but that being said, it usually takes about 3 days to make all the necessary arrangements and complete the paperwork. A casket is NOT required by law for a cremation. All that is required is a suitable rigid container. A cremation container is usually a reinforced cardboard or plywood box. If you wish to hold a funeral service before the cremation, some funeral homes offer rental caskets.

Direct cremations in Arizona

A direct cremation is the least expensive cremation option. It offers the most affordable funeral alternative in Arizona if you wish to conduct a funeral at a minimal cost. A direct cremation is when the deceased is collected from the place of death, transferred to the funeral home or crematory, and a cremation is conducted after the mandatory waiting period and cremation authorization has been completed. Generally the cost of cremation is reduced because a basic cremation container is used and minimal services are required from the funeral director.

Is embalming required in Arizona?

No, embalming is not required by state law if the deceased is refrigerated, cremated or buried within 24 hours. However, a funeral director may recommend embalming if a funeral is not expected to be conducted immediately, or if a viewing or an open-casket ceremony is required. Funeral establishments are not required to have refrigeration by law, so this may be something to take into account when selecting a funeral provider if you wish to avoid embalming.

What are my options for purchasing a casket or alternative container?

A casket is not required by Arizona state law for burial, and a "rigid, combustible container" is all that is required for cremation. Most crematories and cemeteries will have their minimum requirements, so you should make yourself aware of these. But do not feel pressurized into purchasing a casket if it is not required. A casket, whether rubber gasket-sealed or not, will not prevent natural decomposition.

According to the Federal Trade Commission's 'funeral rule', you have the right to purchase a casket from a third-party seller and your funeral establishment must accept it, and cannot charge you a surcharge for doing so. You can generally save a considerable amount of money when purchasing a casket from a retail casket seller. The sale of a casket had long been a

significant way that a funeral home made a profit on a funeral, sometimes marking them up by as much as 500%. After the funeral rule was introduced and an abundance of casket retailers emerged, prices for caskets have come down. Even Costco and Walmart now sell caskets online. If you shop around you will find that you can purchase a standard casket for as little as \$995 these days. Many casket retailers ship across the U.S. and offer a next-day delivery to your funeral home. It is advisable to ensure that you are dealing with a reputable casket retailer that provides excellent customer service.

What are burial and cemetery plot requirements in Arizona?

All cemeteries will have specific regulations that govern the burial plots they manage. They require a minimum container for burial (a casket) and often a grave liner to protect the structure of the burial plot and prevent the collapse of the gravesite. Some cemeteries may insist on a vault liner, and may also have limitations on what kind of grave marker can be erected and how long after the burial you must wait before erecting it. Some cemeteries also offer above-ground burial in structures such as mausoleums, or cremated remains interment in columbarium niches.

Can I pre-plan a funeral or cremation? How does Arizona state law govern preneed plans?

Yes, you can pre-plan a funeral. In Arizona you can arrange a preneed funeral plan where the funds are held in trust, or by having a funeral insurance policy held with an insurance agent. Aside from that you can arrange your own funeral plan and set the funds aside in a Payable-on-death (POD) account. For more information about this read our page on 'Planning Ahead'.

What are the laws for scattering ashes in Arizona?

The cremation rate is increasing and over 60% of Arizona residents choose cremation as their preferred end-of-life choice. Consequently, ash scattering is now a popular memorial activity in Arizona. You can generally scatter cremated remains on public land without the need of a permit. If you wish to scatter remains on your own private property you are at liberty to do so. If you wish to scatter ashes on other private lands (i.e. golf course), you must obtain permission.

In Arizona the Grand Canyon makes for a dramatic backdrop for an ash scattering ceremony, and the National Park does issue free permits for the scattering of cremation ashes. All you need to do is download a letter from www.nps.gov, which can be found here and abide by the regulations set out in the letter. You must have a copy of the letter with you at the time of scattering, and have notified the Concessions Management Office by phone or email the date and place of your scattering ceremony. You must also ensure you scatter the ashes in an appropriate manner in order that they do disperse in entirety. No manner of memorial markers are permitted. To read more about how to scatter ashes visit our section on [Ash Scattering](#). For an aerial scattering you must comply with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved dispersement routes over the Grand Canyon. There are a number of aerial ash scattering companies that operate in Arizona. A basic scattering in areas of Arizona starts at around \$400, but costs around \$550 for the Grand Canyon area, with additional costs for incremental services.

What help is available with funeral expenses in Arizona?

The recent economic downturn has resulted in more families struggling to pay funeral expenses in Arizona. If you need assistance with the cost of a funeral you should consult with your county social services department. Most municipalities do have a budget to cover basic funeral or cremation costs for those on welfare and without funds to pay for a funeral. This is a very basic amount, and they are very stringent about who qualifies for the allowance. This is \$485 for a direct burial and \$385 for a direct cremation, which is payable direct to the funeral establishment.

Are whole body donations permitted in Arizona?

Yes, you can donate your body to science in Arizona. The University of Arizona accept medical donations to science, but you will need to check with them directly as to any limitations on donor acceptance. There are also national body donation organizations. However, you should be aware that an anatomical donation may not always be accepted at the time of death. So you should have a provisional funeral plan in the event a donation cannot be accepted.

What do you do if your loved one dies away from Arizona?

Dealing with the death of a loved one is distressful enough, but can be made even more difficult if a loved one has died whilst away from home. These days as we are a more transient society and travel more, this is happening more often. You will need to decide if you wish to ship the deceased home to Arizona for burial, or wish to perform a cremation at the place of death and ship the cremated remains back. Read our section on 'What to do when a loved one dies away from home' for more information.

Where do I get a copy of a death certificate from in Arizona?

You can obtain copies of death certificates from the Office of Vital Records (OVR), Arizona Department of Health Services, 1818 West Adams, Phoenix, AZ 85007

What should you do if you have a complaint about funeral services or products you have purchased?

In the first instance you should attempt to resolve your grievance directly with the funeral home or cremation provider. If this cannot be successfully achieved, you can make a written complaint to the State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers at 1400 W. Washington, Suite 230, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

For the Tucson area, you may also wish to contact the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Southern Arizona, P.O. Box 12661, Tucson, AZ 85732, who actively work as an advocate for consumer rights.

For the Phoenix-Mesa area, you can contact the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Arizona, PO Box 31297, Phoenix, AZ 85046. There is also the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Northern Arizona at 1280 E. Rosser Street, Prescott, AZ 86301.

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