



USFuneralsOnline
CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH FUNERAL SERVICES NATIONWIDE

How to arrange a funeral or cremation in Georgia

This Georgia funeral-planning guide from US Funerals Online aims to outline some key points you should consider if you are faced with the task of arranging a funeral or cremation service in Georgia, or if you are pre-planning funeral or cremation services.

The responsibility for making final arrangements can be overwhelming, as there are many decisions to be made and state laws can vary somewhat. It helps to familiarize yourself with the Federal Trade Commission's 'funeral rule', but it is also vital to have a clear understanding of how this translates into practice in the state of Georgia.

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

Choosing the 'right' funeral home or cremation provider in Georgia is important to ensuring your funeral needs are met. Traditionally many people just opted for the local funeral home they knew of, the family had previously used, or they had been referred to. But tradition is changing, and people can often have specific funeral requirements that they need to have met, such as working to a tight budget or wanting something more unconventional. It is always wise to ask around and check reviews on funeral homes, and we would recommend you compare services and costs between funeral homes in Georgia, as these can vary considerably. It will help to be clear about what your basic needs are to help you narrow down your selection process.

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

There are in the region of 1000 funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories in Georgia. US Funerals Online lists all funeral establishments in our 'Funeral homes' directory, by state, city and in zip code order. This does make it easy for you to locate and review the funeral homes and cremation providers in Georgia. You can also use the short cut links to the main cities in Georgia on the right-hand side of this page. Narrowing it down to your local area, you can identify local funeral homes in Georgia, and compare services and funeral prices.

Who is responsible for making the funeral arrangements in Georgia?

The immediate next-of-kin usually assumes responsibility for making, or carrying out, funeral arrangements in Georgia. There is a legal stature of responsibility that falls to the spouse first, then children over 18 years, parents and then siblings. If there is any dispute about funeral arrangements your funeral director, a funeral mediator or an attorney should be able to assist.

Do you want a burial or cremation service in Georgia?

Deciding whether you want a burial or a cremation is probably the most important decision to be made initially. Choosing between burial or cremation should be an entirely personal choice. Burial has traditionally been the preferred disposition choice in Georgia; however, times are changing and cremation is gaining popularity. The cost can be a driving factor in making this decision today, as the average burial costs around \$7,640 (according to the National Funeral Directors Association 2019), and this does not include cemetery costs. In comparison, the average cremation costs in Georgia are more in the region of \$3,000 and simple, low-cost cremations can cost as little as \$800 – \$1,000.

There is a mandatory 24-hour waiting period in Georgia before a cremation can be performed. This is standard practice, and a cremation authorization form must be signed by the immediate next of kin to enable the cremation permit to be issued.

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

This is a very valid question and for our consumer culture one that we expect to have answered immediately before making any buying decisions. Yet, unfortunately, the funeral industry historically has steered away from openly disclosing prices. Today the FTC's 'funeral rule' protects funeral consumers. A funeral home in Georgia must provide you with a general price list (GPL) if you make an inquiry about their services. You do not have to provide any personal information, but still, some Georgia funeral homes will ask for your contact information and insist on having a funeral director call you back. Why? Because they want the opportunity to 'sell' their services to you, and a funeral is considered an emotional purchase.

I mentioned above that the national average cost of a funeral is \$7,640 (without a burial plot). **In Georgia, the average cost of a traditional funeral is in the region of \$4,500 (without cemetery fees). A Georgia cremation can cost as little as \$800 if you opt for a simple, direct cremation, or it can range up to around \$4,000 for a cremation with a service.**

DFS Memorials Affordable Cremation Providers

Serving Savannah and surrounding areas. Cremation cost from \$995. Call (912) 208-4313

Serving the Greater Atlanta area. Cremation cost from \$1,095. Call (404) 445-0239

Finding a low-cost cremation or funeral option in Georgia

If you are concerned about funeral costs, the **DFS Memorials providers in Georgia** offer low-cost cremation services and affordable burial services. All DFS Memorials providers guarantee to offer a 'best value' direct cremation package. There are two providers serving Georgia and offering families low-cost cremation and burial alternatives.

Sending funeral flowers in Georgia

Funeral flowers can be expensive. To send inexpensive funeral flowers to a funeral home in Georgia, visit our funeral flowers section. In affiliation with BloomsToday we offer our visitors a 25% discount on a selection of sympathy flowers and everyday low-price savings on funeral sprays and wreaths.

Can I arrange a 'home funeral' or green burial in Georgia?

Yes, there are no specific laws prohibiting home funerals or green burials in Georgia, apart from in Bibb County. If you so wish, you are at liberty to take care of your own loved one. You would need to file the death certificate and obtain the necessary burial permit. If you wish to bury on your own land, you should firstly check with the local zoning ordinance, clearly map out the burial plot and lodge this with the property deeds. It is recommended that you ensure any grave plot is at least 150 feet from any water supply and 25 feet from any power lines.

Honey Creek Woodlands at 212 Highway 212 SW, Conyers, Georgia is a designated green burial cemetery.

Is embalming required in Georgia?

No, embalming is NOT required by law in Georgia. If you require a public viewing or open casket service, your Georgia funeral home may have a policy that requires embalming. Embalming is merely a temporary method to delay decomposition, and if you would prefer not to have your loved one embalmed a timely burial or cremation can avoid this.

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

A casket is NOT required by law for burial in Georgia, and all that is required by law for cremation is a “rigid, combustible container”. There is no law stipulating that you have to purchase a casket, and you can indeed make your own, choose a simple burial shroud or basket or purchase a simple pine coffin. The casket is probably the single most expensive purchase of the funeral, so if you can minimize this cost you will reduce your overall funeral costs.

The **FTC’s funeral rule** stipulates that you have the right to purchase a casket from elsewhere than your funeral home and yet they **MUST** accept it, without charging you a handling fee. This rule was introduced because at one point only funeral homes were selling caskets and they were often marked up by as much as 400-600%. Today, you can buy caskets online at Walmart and Costco, or from other casket retailers, and prices for a basic adult casket can start at around \$995. This change in the industry, and the rise in cremation, has meant that funeral homes in Georgia have become much more competitive in their casket prices. Rental caskets are also available from some Georgia funeral homes, and this can save on the actual cost of purchasing a casket (especially for a cremation service). However, the rental of a casket is not cheap and can cost around \$300 – \$600.

What are burial and cemetery plot requirements in Georgia?

All cemeteries have regulations that govern how they are operated. These regulations are partly in place to protect and manage the perpetual care of the grounds. Before you purchase any burial plot, you would be well advised to thoroughly check the cemetery regulations.

Burial vaults are NOT required by law in Georgia, although many (if not most) cemeteries insist upon them. The burial vault helps them maintain the integrity of the ground and prevent subsidence – it also costs you around \$700. In addition to this, there will be fees to open and close a burial plot, and guidelines as to what kind of grave marker you can erect. There are usually regulations that can limit what happens should you decide you no longer need the plot and wish to re-sell it.

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

Yes, of course, you can pre-plan a funeral or cremation in Georgia. It can greatly alleviate stress for surviving family if there is a funeral plan in place that eliminates the need for decision-making, and even financial anxiety about paying for the funeral.

In Georgia, only a licensed funeral director, operating out of a licensed funeral home, may sell a preneed funeral contract. Pre-paid funeral contracts and cremation plans are held in a trust fund. Whilst it is sensible planning to pre-plan and prepay for a funeral in Georgia, you should carefully consider what happens with your contract.

Another option can be to pre-plan the funeral services you require by pre-registering with a funeral or cremation company and then putting aside the appropriate funds in a POD account. This ensures your plan is in place, your wishes are taken care of, your monies remain safe and secure, yet your designated POD beneficiary can easily access the funds once a death has occurred.

What are the laws for scattering ashes in Georgia?

Georgia law states that cremated remains may be kept by the person who has legal control over the remains (or the authorizing agent), or disposed of in any of the following ways:

- By placing cremated remains in a grave, niche or mausoleum

- By scattering the remains in a designated scattering area or memorial garden
- By scattering remains on any private land with the consent of the landowner
- By scattering the remains on any uninhabited public land or waterway

The scattering of ashes in Georgia is still something of an un-policed matter, however, if you wish to scatter ashes in state parkland, you would be well advised to just check whether any permit or approval is required. If you do scatter in rural parkland, do ensure you conduct the scattering at least 150 feet away from any trail, developed facility or body of water. State parks in Georgia will not allow the erection of any marker or shrine at a scattering site and only biodegradable urns or flowers should be used.

If you wish to scatter your loved one's ashes in the waters off St. Simons and the other Georgia islands, then you can carry out a sea scattering. There are charter services that offer an hour-long sea scattering charter for around \$250. Georgia is in region 4 of the EPA, and if you conduct a sea burial, according to EPA governance, this should be at least 3 nautical miles at sea and a report of the scattering should be filed with your regional EPA within 30 days. Region 4 contact number is (404) 562-9900.

What help is available with funeral expenses in Georgia?

Families ask us this question so often today, and unfortunately, the answer is that there is very limited, if little, help available for paying for a funeral in Georgia. States and counties used to have a budget for indigent burial assistance, but many of these have been cut or completely axed. If the next of kin is in receipt of state welfare or other benefits, you can contact the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and find out if any aid is currently available.

Do not worry alone, consult with friends and local support groups and do bear in mind that a simple direct cremation is the most cost-effective funeral option if you have little, or no, money. The DFS Memorials providers in Georgia both offer a complete direct cremation for under \$1,000.

Are whole-body donations permitted in Georgia?

Yes, you can donate your body to science in the state of Georgia. There are 5 institutions that have body donation programs in Georgia:

- Emory School of Medicine in Atlanta
- Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Suwannee
- Medical College of Georgia in Augusta
- Mercer University School of Medicine in Macon
- Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta

You should check with the institution you are interested in donating to. Terms and acceptance onto a body donation program can vary.

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

As a more mobile population, this is happening more often today. If your loved one dies whilst away from Georgia, you will need the services of a mortuary shipper. To find out more about shipping human remains domestically, or indeed internationally, visit our **Funeral Shipping** section.

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

Death certificates are only issued to family members or legal representatives with a tangible interest. A certified copy of a death record can be obtained from the Georgia Vital Records Office in Atlanta, or from the county office. You can obtain a copy in person, by mail or online. Do check the office opening hours if you decide to apply in person. You will need to provide ID and fill in an application form. The fee for a death certificate in Georgia is \$25.00 for the first copy and \$5.00 for each additional copy.

Vital Records

2600 Skyland Drive, NE

Atlanta, GA 30319

(404) 679-4702

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

The state board licenses all funeral homes in Georgia, and in the event that you should have a grievance with a licensed establishment that you cannot resolve with the funeral home, you can lodge a formal complaint with the state board.

The Georgia Board of Funeral Service can be reached at 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, GA, 31217 Phone (478) 207-2440

Funeral Consumer Support in Georgia

The Funeral Consumers Alliance has a chapter in Georgia, and they provide member services to assist people in arranging funeral services.

US Funerals Online Customer Support Team

Email : help@us-funerals.com

Phone: (877) 225-0834

3 Germany Drive Suite 4-4261

Wilmington

Delaware 19804