

What to consider when arranging a funeral or cremation in Idaho?

This funeral planning guide from US Funerals Online aims to answer some of the immediate questions you may have when arranging a funeral or cremation in Idaho. Funeral laws differ by state and this can affect aspects of what you can legally do when making funeral arrangements. We have provided an overview of your legal rights, and some guidance on how to save money when arranging a funeral.

Choosing a funeral home in Idaho

For most families, choosing the funeral home or cremation services provider is the first step in making funeral arrangements. However, you can legally conduct your own funeral arrangements if you so wish in Idaho and you do not legally have to employ the services of a funeral director.

All funeral service providers must be licensed and there are in the region of 120 funeral homes and mortuaries in Idaho so you need to consider what criteria can help you select the right funeral home for your needs. Selecting a funeral service provider can be determined by both your location and what kind of funeral services you require.

Are you looking for a traditional funeral or burial service? Or are you seeking something more contemporary? Is the cost of the funeral an issue, are you working to a tight budget and looking to save money where you can on funeral expenses? Obviously having some clear ideas of what you do need from a funeral home helps you make the decision of which funeral home is right for you. It can really help you to narrow down which funeral services provider to select by clearly outlining what your needs are before you start contacting funeral homes.

Word of mouth recommendations or referrals from family or friends have long been a good place to start. However, if you are not in a position to benefit from a sound referral, or you are seeking something specific, you may have to resort to contacting funeral homes yourself. Usually people look for a reputable funeral business in their own area, but it is always advisable to check with more than one funeral home and compare services and prices for a funeral or cremation.

What does an average funeral cost in Idaho?

The average cost of a funeral in the U.S. is \$7,640 (according to the NFDA – National Association of Funeral Directors 2019), and this does not include any cemetery fees. This generally means that the full cost of a funeral can amount to nearer to \$9,000 when cemetery fees are included. The cost for a traditional burial is largely dependent on the type of casket you select and the final cost of your cemetery plot and grave marker. The cost for a funeral can be broken down into several components – the funeral director’s professional service charges, casket, embalming, transportation and ancillary costs such as flowers, music, prayer cards, obituary etc.

Prices do vary between funeral service providers for the exact same service therefore it is important that you DO shop around and compare funeral prices between more than one funeral home. That way you can be sure that you have a “best value” funeral service.

All funeral homes in Idaho must have a general price list (GPL) that outlines their service charges and funeral merchandise prices. They must provide a copy of their GPL when they quote you a price according to the Federal Trade Commission's 'The Funeral Rule'.

How much does a cremation cost in Idaho?

A typical cremation funeral service will cost in the region of \$3,000 (depending upon the ancillary services/products you select). This is the type of cremation service that replaces a full traditional funeral, however, it is possible to arrange a simple cremation for considerably less than this, as outlined below in the section on direct cremation.

Who is responsible to pay for funeral costs in Idaho?

If you have not made provision in a funeral plan, a POD account, life insurance or sufficient funds made accessible to surviving family, then your next of kin (making the funeral arrangements) will become liable for the funeral expenses. Check out our Library article on 'What is my best and safest option for putting aside money for a funeral?'

Arranging a direct cremation in Idaho

A direct cremation can be arranged in some cities in Idaho for around \$1,200. This is the least expensive cremation option for families. A direct cremation means that there are no services, the cremation goes ahead once all the documentation has been completed and then the cremated remains are returned to the family in a temporary container. Incremental options, such as a private family viewing or an upgraded cremation urn, can be added to a basic direct cremation package for an additional fee. This is proving a no fuss, affordable and efficient way to manage a disposition when a death occurs. Many families today are opting for a direct cremation and then conducting their own memorial services once the cremated remains are returned to the family.

If you are concerned about funeral costs, the DFS Memorials providers in Kentucky offer low cost cremation services and affordable burial services. All DFS Memorials providers guarantee to offer a 'best value' direct cremation package.

How do I decide between a burial or a cremation in Idaho?

Choosing burial or cremation is a personal choice. If the deceased left explicit wishes this can simplify decisions otherwise surviving family may have to make a decision. Funds for the funeral service can play a significant role in whether a burial or cremation is chosen these days as cremation is significantly cheaper than a traditional burial service. Having a pre-existing cemetery plot can be an important aspect as burial plots can be quite expensive to purchase these days. If cremation is chosen, a cremation authorization form will need to be signed by the immediate next of kin for a cremation to proceed. Green burial is also another option that can be considered as an eco-friendly disposition. If you are unsure whether to choose between burial or cremation, talk to family and friends, and discuss the decision with your funeral director.

What legally do I need to know about cremation?

Each state has its own laws governing cremation procedures. A crematory and/or funeral home must abide by certain practice standards in disposing of human remains by cremation. However, certain regulations can vary by state. In Idaho 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. Generally, there is a mandatory waiting period of 24 hours before a cremation can proceed but this is not enforced in Idaho. That being said, it usually takes about 3 days to make all the necessary arrangements and complete the paperwork but an expedited service can be arranged if required.

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.

What can we do with the cremated remains? Laws for ash scattering in Idaho

Cremated remains can be interred in a grave plot or cremation niche, stored in a cremation urn at home or scattered. There are also today a multitude of creative cremation artefacts that can be created from cremation ashes, such as cremation diamonds, glass jewellery, birdbaths, and portraits to name but a few. Check out our Ash Scattering section for more information.

You can scatter cremated remains in a designated memorial scattering garden, on private land (with the landowner's consent) or on many public and state lands. If considering scattering on public or municipal land you should check local zoning ordinance first. There is, however, no 'cremains police' and cremated remains are sterile organic matter so they pose no threat to the environment. As long as you use safe scattering techniques, there really should be no concern about scattering ashes into the atmosphere.

Does the deceased have to be embalmed?

There is no legal requirement, or state law, stipulating that the deceased has to be embalmed. Idaho law requires that a body be refrigerated or embalmed if the final disposition is not conducted within 24 hours. If the deceased needs shipping embalming may be required, or if death was due to a communicable disease and a viewing is being held. Embalming is required if a public service is to be held and the deceased would be removed from refrigeration for a period exceeding 6 hours.

Can I conduct a home funeral in Idaho?

Conducting your own 'home funeral' is a very personal way of saying goodbye. It is perfectly legal to conduct a home funeral in Idaho, without requiring the services of a funeral director. This would mean that you would need to file the death certificate and obtain a burial or cremation permit.

If you wish to bury your loved one at home on your own land and establish a family cemetery, you must first check with the local planning commission about any local zoning. You would need to draw up a map of the property showing the burial ground and file it with the property deed and provide disclosure of the burial if you sell the property.

How do I get a death certificate in Idaho?

The death certificate is generally prepared and filed by the funeral director. In Idaho it must be filed with a local registrar within 5 days after the death and before the cremation or burial takes place. [Statute § 39-260] The funeral director will need all the personal information about the deceased in order to file the death certificate. He can order you multiple copies (if required for settling the deceased's estate) or you can order additional copies yourself at a later date. The original death certificate is filed in the county where the death occurred.

You can obtain a certified copy of a death certificate either online, by phone, by mail or in person from Idaho's Department of Health and Welfare. The fee for a copy of a death certificate is \$14.00. In person a copy can be obtained within about 40 minutes, regular mail takes 5-7 days and online it takes 2 days to be processed and then the shipping time. Expedited shipping can be arranged.

You do need to produce suitable ID in order to order copies of a person's death certificate. You must be the deceased person's next of kin, a legal representative of the deceased or family

members, a government agency, or an investigator. If the death occurred over 50 years ago, anyone can order a copy of the death certificate.

Purchasing a casket or grave marker in Idaho

We have comprehensive and detailed guides to buying a casket or grave marker, so I would recommend you visit these sections for more detailed information. Use the links on the left-hand side. Even though Idaho law states that only licensed funeral homes can sell caskets (Idaho Stature §§ 54-1102 and 54-1103), Federal law (and the 'Funeral Rule') requires a funeral home to accept a casket you purchased from a third-party source, and your funeral home cannot charge a fee for this.

Can I pre-plan a funeral in Idaho?

Yes, and pre-planning your funeral is a great way to save surviving family the stress of making funeral decisions, and finding the money to pay for a funeral. You can make pre-need funeral arrangements direct with a funeral home or purchase burial insurance. You should check whether a preneed contract is 'guaranteed' or 'non-guaranteed' to cover the full costs of the funeral at a later date

What you DO need to consider is that funeral prices could indeed be coming down. Funeral companies promote preplanning on the basis that it "locks into today's prices", but with the cremation trend increasing, and more funeral homes competing for the 'affordable' funeral market – the reality is that the funeral costs are not as 'fixed' as they once were.

Another funeral planning alternative is to document your wishes and put aside the appropriate funds in a POD Payable on Death account or a Totten Trust. This enables family to access the funds at the time of need and make the funeral arrangements, but you keep in control of your monies and any accrued interest. Read more in our article 'What is my best and safest option for putting aside money for a funeral'.

Can I donate my body to science in Idaho?

Yes, donating your body to science can be a great way to meet your end-of-life needs. You provide a 'gift' to society and eliminate funeral costs! MedCure offer whole body donation and take care of everything for you. You can pre-register your interest to donate if you wish, which can help speed the process when a death occurs. Check out our Body Donation section.

Veterans Funerals in Idaho

Veterans are entitled to certain benefits – namely a free cemetery plot, grave marker and US flag. A copy of the DD214 discharge papers are required to claim these benefits and you would need to contact the local VA office. In many cases the funeral director will assist you with this, or undertake it on your behalf. The VA cemetery in Boise has space for both casketed and cremated remains.

How can I transport a loved one either back to, or from, Idaho after death?

If a loved one needs to be transported back to a state or country of origin following their death in Idaho, you will need the services of a funeral director who can arrange funeral shipping for you. This generally needs a funeral professional who can coordinate arrangements at the place of death and wherever the body is being shipped to.

If transporting a loved one between states in the United States you have the option of flying the body, or transporting the body by land. Certain regulations do apply on moving a body, and it is likely that embalming will be required as well as specific containers to hold the casket. Shipping a body can be quite expensive, so the other alternative you have is to have the body cremated

at the place of death, and then transport back the cremated remains. Visit our section on Funeral Shipping to read more.

The deceased had no life insurance – what do I do if I cannot afford a funeral?

If you find yourself liable to make funeral arrangements for a lost loved one, and you do not have sufficient funds, this can be very distressing. There is very limited financial aid for funerals and this varies by county. In such cases the coroner may make arrangements with a funeral home and costs should not exceed the actual minimal cost of a burial or cremation. Generally, a fixed amount is set that the county or state will pay for pauper burial assistance. The state is responsible for the disposition of indigents or any individual who becomes a responsibility of Idaho. You need to contact your local County human services or social services to find out what help may be available. A simple cremation is the least expensive disposition option.

Who should I contact if I have a complaint about a funeral home in Idaho?

Hopefully you will find the services of your funeral home more than adequate, as most funeral professionals are very dedicated in their vocation. Unfortunately though, it does sometimes happen that you may have a complaint or grievance with a funeral home and you do not manage to resolve it directly with the funeral director. In this case you should make your complaint in writing to the Idaho Board of Morticians who regulates and licenses funeral businesses in Idaho. They can be contacted at: Bureau of Occupational Licenses, 700 West State Street, PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720.

Another useful consumer resource is the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho Inc. PO Box 1919, Boise ID 83701 (an affiliate of the Funeral Consumers Alliance).

I hope this guide has helped to answer some of your immediate questions about making funeral arrangements. Please check out our Library/info section for our full catalogue of resources to help you through the process of arranging a funeral. Feel free to contact us if we can be of any assistance with any further questions you may have.

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