



Arranging a Funeral or Cremation in Alberta

Arranging a funeral can be an extremely daunting task, especially if you are not quite prepared or are recently bereaved. The aim of this funeral and cremation guide is to help answer some of the questions you might have about arranging a funeral or cremation in Alberta. This will hopefully allow you to make more informed decisions for your loved one's end-of-life celebration and give you a better idea of your options.

There are around 140 funeral homes in Alberta and all funeral homes are listed in our [Funeral Homes directory](#), allowing you to find a funeral service provider in your area that meets your needs.

What to do when a death occurs

Once you have found a funeral service provider that meets your needs, one of the first things you will need to do is to register the death with the government. The Registration of Death form will normally be completed when funeral arrangements are being made at the funeral home. The funeral home will register the death and send the required documents to Vital Statistics. After a death had been registered you will be able to order Death Certificates from a registry agent as needed. There is a \$20 charge for each death certificate ordered, however registry agents will usually charge additional service fees which can vary. It ordinarily takes 3 business days for processing by Vital Statistics once documents have been received, and additional time for delivery.

Who is responsible for paying for funeral arrangements?

The responsibility for making and paying for a funeral falls to the immediate next of kin if the deceased did not pre-arrange and pre-pay for a funeral plan. This can be quite a burden, and is why more seniors today are considering setting up simple cremation arrangements.

Pre-planning can be simple and affordable, and give family peace of mind for when the time comes. *Be aware that whomever signs the funeral contract with the funeral home is considered legally responsible for payment of the funeral bill.*

How much does a funeral cost in Alberta?

A funeral can be a significant expense, depending on what kind of service you opt for. You can expect to spend anything between \$4,000 to \$12,000 for a funeral in Alberta. The funeral director will charge a 'professional service fee' that usually covers their basic services to transport the deceased, obtain the medical certificate of death, register the death and complete all necessary government forms.

Depending on whether you opt for a burial or cremation, you may have additional costs for such things as embalming, a casket and/or an urn and cemetery burial plot. Other indirect costs can be things like the services of an officiant, clergy and organist, obituary notices and flowers. A funeral home MUST provide you with a 'General Price List' that specifically itemizes their charges. A funeral home cannot refuse to accept funeral merchandise (such as a casket) that you have purchased from another source.

What is the most affordable funeral option in Alberta?

A direct cremation is the most affordable and simple funeral option. A direct cremation simply means that the deceased remains are collected from the place of death, cremated and the remains returned to the family in a basic urn. The family can then choose to do as they wish with the cremated remains, including holding their own memorial service at a place and time suitable for all family members to attend, and/or an ash-scattering.

Canadian Funeral Online works with DFS Memorials of Canada to connect people at their time of need with a local, independent, family-owned funeral home that offers a low-cost funeral. We select licensed, local funeral directors who understand the need to balance cost and dignity.

How much does a cremation service cost?

If you opt for a cremation in Alberta, then a casket or container will be required for the service. Often times funeral homes will offer a rental casket for the funeral service, this can help keep funeral costs down, and make it even more affordable if you have a specific financial budget in mind.

According to LowestRates.ca, funeral or cremation costs in Canada can be "as low as \$1,500 or as high as \$20,000", with the average cost being around \$8,500. The DFS Memorials provider for Calgary is 'Choice Memorial Cremation & Funeral Services' and they offer a basic cremation service for \$1,295. Contact them now on (403) 800-0331 with any enquiries.

The DFS Memorials provider for Edmonton is "Simply Cremations & Funeral Services" and they offer a basic cremation service for \$1,095. You can contact them on (780) 851-2421

Calgary - Direct cremation \$1,295 Call **(403) 800-0331**

Edmonton – Direct Cremation \$1,095 Call **(780) 851-2421**

How to save on funeral expenses.

Another option you have if you opt for a direct cremation, is to hold your own memorial service at a time which is convenient for you and your family. This can even be done at home and is another way to save on funeral costs by allowing you to have your own 'send-off', without the need to pay out to a funeral home.

Can I Pre-plan a Funeral or Cremation in Alberta?

More and more people are opting to pre-plan and pre-pay for funeral arrangements to unburden their loved ones at their time of passing. Pre-financing a funeral can be done in installments or in a lump sum payment. Funeral homes who offer a preplanning service must have licensed, pre-need qualified staff, and the funds are usually held in trust which cannot be accessed until a copy of the statement of death is issued. It is worth noting, however, that it is a good idea to discuss any pre-financing arrangements with family so that they are aware that the money is in a trust before they make arrangements inadvertently.

Can I Scatter My Loved Ones Ashes in Alberta?

The scattering of cremated remains on public land is not prohibited in Alberta under provincial laws and regulations, such as the *Public Lands Act*, the *Public Lands Administrative Regulation*, the *Water Act* and the *Water Regulations*. However, when scattering ashes, you should consider the impact to the public and to the environment. You can find more guidelines on scattering ashes on the Open Government site for Alberta.

What to Do if a Death Occurs outside of Alberta, or the deceased needs transporting to another Province or Country?

If your loved one dies outside of Alberta and needs transporting back to the Province, you will need the services of a funeral home experienced in funeral shipping. A local funeral home will usually coordinate with a funeral home at the place where the deceased's body is and arrange the transfer of the remains. Shipping a body is more costly than shipping cremated remains, and there is paperwork that needs to be completed also. As a general guide the fee for handling the transfer of remains internationally can be around \$4,000 plus the actual shipping fee from the airline.

How to Arrange a Whole Body Donation in Alberta?

If you wish to donate your whole body to science for medical research then you need to register with an anatomical gift program. Both the University of Alberta, Edmonton and the University of Calgary have Body donation programs.

You can contact the Body Donation Program for the University of Alberta at:

Division of Anatomy

5.01 Medical Sciences
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H7
780-492-2628

Alternatively, you can contact the Body Donation Program for University of Calgary at:

University of Calgary - Health Sciences Centre

B723
3330 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 4N1
Telephone: 403-220-6895

[What help is available for funeral expenses?](#)

Alberta Human Services may provide basic funeral services for those receiving assistance from Alberta Works- Income Support, AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped), or indigent persons. Basic funeral services are provided for under an Agreement with funeral homes in Alberta.

Furthermore, the Victims of Crime Financial Benefit Program provides a death benefit to eligible victims that have died of violent crime in Alberta. Funeral costs may be claimed by the person who has paid these costs.

If you have any questions about the Financial Benefits Application, call the program at 780-427-7217. Additional information is also available at <http://www.victims.alberta.ca>

[What green funeral alternatives are available in Alberta?](#)

If you would prefer a greener funeral alternative your options are somewhat limited in Alberta. However, there are a few options, such as Rosehill Cemetery in Southwest Edmonton. Rosehill has space for nearly 900 green graves as part of The Meadows of Rosehill, a one-acre plot of land at the back of its site. They are currently one of the few cemeteries in Alberta that offer green burials, however this is likely to change as more people look for a greener alternative to a traditional burial or cremation.

[What happens if the deceased is at the coroner or medical examiner's office?](#)

The deceased will be transferred to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) if the death occurred suddenly or it cannot be explained. It is the responsibility of the coroner to determine a cause of death before a death certificate can be issued. You will then be able to arrange for a funeral home to collect your loved one. The Medical Examiner will issue the death certificate and permit to cremate once they release the body.

If you have further questions about identifying the body and making arrangements for the transfer of the deceased, you can contact OCME for Calgary on 403-297-8123 and they can be found at:

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
4070 Bowness Road NW
Calgary, Alberta T3B 3R7

For Edmonton, you can contact the OCME on 780-427-4987 and they can be found at:

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
7007 116 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5R8

[Who Can I Contact if I Have a complaint or Grievance With a Funeral Home in Alberta?](#)

If you have a grievance with a funeral home you should first attempt to resolve it with them directly. If you have already attempted to resolve it with the funeral home concerned then you should write to the Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board (AFSRB). You can call the Board office on 1.800.563.4652 to request a complaint form, or you can find a print a form from the Forms Section of their website.

Resources:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5065675/new-guidelines-alberta-cremated-ashes/>