

PRE-PLANNING YOUR FUNERAL

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Death is not a concept embraced warmly in our culture. In fact, if at all possible, most of us try not to think about our death. Pre-Planning your funeral can be an act of caring for your friends and family members. They will know exactly what you want for your final ceremony and will not have to make decisions when they are grieving. Pre-Planning, most especially, gives you peace of mind and a sense of control. Pre-Planning does not have to be overwhelming or scary. Here are some things to keep in mind.



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1. **Speak Up:** It is your funeral. Make sure you write down and talk to friends and family about what you wish for your funeral, including cremation or burial, type of casket, memorial stones, or urns you wish to use.
2. **To Listen Is Important:** Find a Funeral Director who listens to your wishes instead of imposing his or her own thoughts. A Funeral Director is there to offer you advice but remember, all plans need to be your decision.
3. **Write Down Thoughts:** A new concept for letting family and friends know your thoughts is called an Ethical Will. This type of will is distinctly different from a document that states how your assets should be divided. An Ethical Will gives your thoughts for people you have cared about during your life.
4. **Make Decisions:** Make decisions on who receives your assets before you are gone. These decisions create a precious way to pass on memories and stories to your family before you die. You could even color code each item in your house with a dot. Each colored dot represents a family member or friend. Write down the story associated with heirloom pieces and tape it somewhere. This way memories are cherished from generation to generation.

After you have planned your final ceremony and you have decided you want to set aside funds to cover the costs, make sure you understand your options for Pre-Paying as well as the terminology used.

Here are some things to know:

1. **Direct Pay:** If you choose, you can pay the funeral home directly. The funeral home then places the money in a "funeral trust" at the bank. This trust builds interest in hopes that it will keep pace with inflation between the time the money is deposited and the need is present.
2. **Time Payments:** Some funeral homes make arrangements for you to pay them over time, but most prefer that you take out an insurance policy. This gives you, as the payer, more security and the funeral home has the insurance company as an administrator of the payments and death benefits. In addition, insurance guarantees payment of the pre-need amount in the event you die prior to the payment being made in full.
3. **Know The Insurance Company:** There are many companies who offer pre-need insurance just like there are many companies who offer car insurance. It is important to understand the difference offered by each - like price and type of coverage. Also make sure to ask if the growth rate of the policy in combination with the death benefit will be enough to satisfy the funeral cost at time of need.
4. **Understand The Payment Plans:** Pre-need insurance usually is offered with different plan options. One payment plan may fit your financial needs more than another plan.
5. **Find The Right Plan:** Talk to your funeral director about your funeral plan. Make sure he or she knows whether you might move away from where the funeral home is located, have special burial plans in a cemetery out of town, or future financial concerns.

Pre-Planning your funeral might seem overwhelming. However if you think of it as a way to pass on cherished memories and wishes, planning could become a rewarding experience that can offer great peace of mind.