



**USFuneralsOnline**  
CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH FUNERAL SERVICES NATIONWIDE

## Arranging a funeral or cremation in Washington

US Funerals Online brings you this comprehensive guide outlining your key consumer rights in order to help you to arrange a funeral or cremation in Washington and save money on funeral costs.

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

Being faced with making funeral arrangements is daunting, especially if it is the first time you have had the experience and you are also coping with your loss. The first important step is to be able to choose a funeral director who can best serve the needs of your family. This is not just about arranging a good 'send-off', and supporting you through the funeral arranging process, it is about understanding your specific death care requirements. Often families opt to contact a funeral home that they have been recommended to or have had prior experience with. This is not always an option or the best thing to do. You may want something different, or costs may be a concern.

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

There are around 419 funeral businesses in Washington, so you need to narrow down by where you are located and what your needs are. i.e. burial or cremation, traditional or simple, etc. You can use our directory of Washington funeral homes by visiting our Funeral Homes section to locate funeral homes near you.

### Do you want a burial or cremation?

This is the other key decision you must make when you embark on arranging a funeral and knowing this before contacting a funeral provider can help you choose and compare funeral homes. Deciding between burial or cremation is an entirely personal choice. Cremation is certainly more popular in Washington with around 76% of residents selecting cremation as their preferred end-of-life disposition choice. Cremation is certainly cheaper than a burial, plus many consider it more environmentally-friendly than a traditional burial. For a cremation to be performed a Disposition Authorization must be completed. This can be done as part of preplanning and you may sign your own disposition form, or the surviving next-of-kin can complete the form.

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

Yes, it is legal in Washington to conduct your own death care without the services of a funeral director. A 'home' funeral or green funeral is an alternative option for burial in Washington. There are organizations and funeral companies that specifically assist with home death care and organizing a green burial. However, you cannot bury your loved one on your own land, burial in Washington must be in an established cemetery unless you register the land as a cemetery and establish a \$25,000 perpetual care fund.

### What is the cost of a funeral or cremation in Washington?

This is one question that most online browsers are searching for. Although funeral homes are required by law to provide you with a general price list (GPL) if you make any inquiries, many still do not disclose prices on their websites. Prices can, and do, vary considerably both

between funeral homes, and areas, for the equivalent services. It is highly recommended that you shop around and compare prices and reviews for funeral homes. The National Funeral Directors Association surveyed the average cost of a funeral in 2019 at \$7,640 (not including cemetery costs).

If you are looking to save on costs on a funeral or cremation in Washington, you can contact [DFS Memorials in Washington](#). DFS Memorials works in partnership with local, family-owned funeral homes to offer you low-cost cremation and burial options. All DFS Memorials providers guarantee to offer a 'best value' direct cremation package. **In Washington, a direct cremation costs just \$600.**

#### **DFS Memorials Cremation Providers**

Serving Seattle and surrounding area. Cremation cost from \$600. Call (206) 745-9744

Serving Tacoma and surrounding area. Cremation cost from \$600. Call (253) 237-8460

Serving Vancouver and surrounding area. Cremation cost from \$600. Call (360) 218-7771

### **Sending Funeral Flowers to a funeral home in Washington**

Funeral flowers are an integral part of funerals. They help to brighten up a somber event and are a means by which we share our feelings of passion, love, and empathy. Traditionally the deceased's family will arrange any casket spray, but other relatives or friends may choose to add their own floral arrangements, standing sprays, and wreaths. Your funeral director may be able to offer you floral services, but do ensure their price is competitive. It is an ancillary service that you will be charged for, and you may find it can cost more than purchasing directly yourself. If you wish to manage your budget on funeral flowers and wish to order inexpensive flower arrangements, US Funerals Online has partnered with [Blooms Today](#) to offer our customers up to a 50% discount on funeral flowers in Washington.

### **Is embalming required in Washington?**

No, embalming is not required by law, and refrigeration may be used to store the deceased if there is not an immediate disposition.

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

A casket is not required by law for burial, but a rigid combustible alternative container is required for cremation. This alternative container can be a rigid cardboard or plywood box. You have the right to purchase a casket from a third-party casket seller and your funeral home must accept it without adding a surcharge. This can make a significant saving on your overall funeral costs. **Typically, a standard casket from a funeral home can cost around \$3,000 whereas you can purchase a standard casket from a retailer or online from as little as \$995.** Most retailers can also offer next-day delivery.

### **What are burial and cemetery plot requirements in Washington?**

All cemeteries are licensed by the state but individual cemeteries have their own regulations. A burial vault is not required by law but some cemeteries will stipulate one must be used to prevent subsidence and help maintain the integrity of the earth.

## Natural and green burial alternatives in Washington

Washington has been a progressive state in terms of more environmentally-friendly disposition alternatives. On May 21, 2019, Governor Inslee signed SB 5001 Concerning Human Remains into law, legalizing alkaline hydrolysis (aquamation) and “natural organic reduction” (NOR) which is a form of contained recomposition.

There are also 4 natural burial cemeteries in Washington. Check out our Green Burials section. A natural burial plot costs around \$3,000. This means that residents of Washington have numerous death care options, depending on their preferences. From a simple, direct cremation starting at \$600, NOR is expected to cost between \$3,800 and \$5,500, and a full-service traditional funeral at around \$7,640.

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

Preplanning is a good way to alleviate your surviving family of the emotional and financial burden of arranging a funeral. Only a licensed funeral establishment with a certificate of registration can sell preneed funeral contracts, and this is funded either via a trust fund or an insurance policy. There is some skepticism about preneed contracts, and you can just as easily document your funeral wishes and put aside the appropriate funds in a payable-on-death (POD) account or Totten Trust. This can be your [safest option for preplanning a funeral](#).

## What are the laws for scattering ashes in Washington?

You can scatter cremated remains on any private land (with the permission of the landowner). To scatter in national parkland, you need permission from the Chief Park Ranger, and for state trust uplands you need permission from the regional manager. Details about obtaining a permit to scatter in Mount Rainier National Park are available here: no commercial scattering services are permitted to operate and scatter on state trust uplands. You should scatter ashes on the ground at least 100 yards from any trail, road, developed building, or waterway. No memorial marker is permitted and no publicity of the scattering.

Scattering in the Puget Sound, Pacific Ocean, Lake Washington or any inland water is permitted within the 3-mile limit as enforced by Region 10 of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Such scatterings should be reported to the local administrator of the EPA at 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101 within 30 days of the scattering.

Scattering is permitted from Washington state scheduled ferries (WSF) and 3-5 days' notice is required for a scattering memorial service to be conducted. Ceremonies can only be held during non-peak sailing times, and only if weather conditions permit. Ashes must be in a biodegradable container that can be easily dropped. A member of the WSF crew will accompany a member of your party to the aft of the ferry into the restricted area so the container may be cast into the water. At the captain's discretion, the ferry's horn may be sounded. To find out more contact WSF admin on (206) 264-3554.

Only biodegradable containers and floral tributes should be used for any public scattering purposes.

## What help is available with funeral expenses in Washington?

There is the \$255 lump-sum death payment for those that qualify. Veterans and their dependents may be entitled to some benefits. There is a VA cemetery in Kent and interment and the grave marker are free of charge for the veteran, spouse, and certain dependants.

There is also a state-run veteran's cemetery in Medical Lake where a fee is charged to inter a spouse or dependent. Contact your local VA office for more information. Each county runs its own indigent burial program and requirements and benefits vary between each county. Funds for this provision are limited, even more so due to the state of the economy, and these days just a direct cremation may be funded with county resources. For more information contact: King County: (206) 732-3232, Snohomish County: (425) 438-6200 and Pierce County: (253) 798-6494.

## Are whole-body donations permitted in Washington?

Yes, you may donate your body to science. The University of Washington's School of Medicine accepts donations and is a non-profit organization. Following the donation, the cremated remains are interred in the community plot at Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery or can be returned to the family. You should note that not all donations can be accepted.

## What do you do if your loved one dies away from Washington?

Sadly this does happen, and if you wish to ship the body back to Washington, you will need the services of a mortuary shipper at the place of death who can arrange to prepare your loved one, complete the necessary documentation and arrange for the shipping in coordination with the receiving funeral home in Washington. The average costs for this service are around \$3000-\$4000, and this is before you start making funeral arrangements. It can be much less expensive to arrange a direct cremation at the place of death and have the cremated remains shipped back. Visit our section on [funeral shipping services](#) to read more.

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

To obtain a certified copy of a death certificate in the Seattle and King County area contact the Office of Vital Records (OVR) at:

*Ninth & Jefferson Building  
908 Jefferson St  
Second Floor  
Seattle, WA*

You can call in person or order by mail and a copy costs \$20.00. If you wish to order online or by credit card you will need to go through the VitalChek network.

For deaths that occurred outside of King County, you need:

*Washington Department of Health  
Center for Health Statistics  
Town Center 1  
101 Israel Road SE  
Tumwater, WA 98501*

If the death occurred within the last two months you can obtain a certificate from your local district [Health Department](#).

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

If you have a complaint about funeral services or merchandise you have purchased in Washington you can contact the Washington State Department of Licensing. The details of how to make a formal complaint and the form to be completed can be downloaded [here](#): You can also contact the local funeral director's association if the funeral home is a member.

*Washington State Funeral Directors Association  
1535 SW Dash Point Road  
Federal Way, Washington 98023*

The People's Memorial Association (PMA) was founded in 1939 and is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Washington residents save money on funerals. They also act as an advocacy for consumers on all end-of-life matters.

*1801 12th Ave Suite A  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Phone: 206-325-0489*

### **US Funerals Online Customer Support Team**

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