

Glossary of Terms

ADMINISTRATOR

A court appointed person or body put in charge of the estate of a person who died without a will.

ARRANGEMENT APPOINTMENT

A meeting of the family members and/or friends of the deceased to finalise funeral arrangements. During this meeting the funeral director will discuss the family's wishes and budget, and make the necessary arrangements for the service. They will also prepare a binding contract for the funeral goods and services selected by the family. This meeting usually takes place at the funeral home, however, it may also be held at a hospital or the family's home.

ARRANGEMENT ROOM

A meeting room at the funeral home used to make the necessary funeral arrangements with the family of the deceased.

AT-NEED

Refers to services rendered at the time of death, in contrast to 'Pre-need', which include planning and other services offered prior to, or in preparation for, a death.

AUTOPSY / POST MORTEM

This is a medical procedure used to determine the cause of death, because the cause of death is unknown, or following a sudden, violent, accidental or unexpected death (including during or soon after a hospital procedure such as surgery). In most cases, a doctor or the police will refer a death to the coroner for an autopsy to be

performed. In some instances, a hospital doctor will perform an autopsy to find out more about an illness or the cause of death, or to further medical research and understanding.

BENEFICIARY

Any recipient of the proceeds of a will or insurance policy.

BEQUEST

Any gift of property made in a will.

BEREAVED

(n) The immediate family of the deceased, (v) suffering from grief upon the death of a loved one.

BURIAL

The act of placing a dead person in the ground.

BURIAL / CREMATION PERMIT

Some states and territories require a permit or certificate for human remains to be buried or cremated. This can be provided by your funeral director.

CASKET / COFFIN

A container of wood, metal, cardboard or other material designed specifically for holding human remains for burial or cremation.

CATAFALQUE

The fixed stand (not transportable) on which the casket/coffin can rest during a viewing and the funeral service. (See Trolley – collapsible stand).

CELEBRANT

An individual who officiates at a funeral service. Generally they have visited the family, and will conduct the funeral or memorial service and either speak of the deceased on behalf of the family, or just support the family who wish to speak.

CEMETERY

An area of ground set aside for the burial or entombment of the deceased.

CERTIFIED DEATH CERTIFICATE

A legalized copy of the original death certificate (See Death Certificate). A certified copy is a copy (often a photocopy) of a primary document that has on it, an endorsement that it is a true copy of the primary document. It is required for the purpose of substantiating various claims by the family of the deceased, such as matters in settling the deceased's estate, insurance and other death benefits.

CHAPEL

A large room in a funeral home or other location in which the funeral or memorial service can be held.

CLERGY

The body of people ordained or recognized by a religious community as ritual or spiritual leaders, who will conduct a funeral service.

COLUMBARIUM

A structure or building with niches designed to house cremated remains in urns.

COMMITTAL

The concluding rite of a funeral service is the committal, whereby the final words are said by the officiant. This can take place at the funeral service, a graveside, or in the case of a cremation, in the crematorium chapel.

CORONER

A coroner is a lawyer whose duty it is to investigate a death if it appears to be from other than natural causes, or if there was no doctor in attendance for a long time prior to death.

CORTEGE

The procession of people or vehicles led by the hearse, which travels from the funeral service to the cemetery or crematorium or other final resting place.

CREMATED REMAINS

The remains of the body after a cremation, sometimes called ashes.

CREMATION

A regulated process using intense heat in a specially designed chamber to render human remains into ash.

CREMATION / BURIAL PERMIT

Some states and territories require a permit or certificate for human remains to be buried or cremated. This can be provided by your funeral director.

CREMATOR

A furnace used for the cremation process.

CREMATORIUM

A building or facility with the equipment needed for cremating human remains, and usually with a chapel for conducting funeral services.

CRYPT

An individual chamber in a mausoleum (See Mausoleum), that can contain casketed human remains.

DEATH CERTIFICATE

A certificate stating details of the deceased that have been gathered from the family, which is issued

by the Births, Deaths and Marriages section of the State or Territory government. A 'certified copy' (see Certified Death Certificate) is required for the purpose of substantiating various claims by the family of the deceased, such as matters in settling the deceased's estate, insurance and other death benefits.

DEATH NOTICE

This is a notice in the classified section of a newspaper, or on the internet, publicising the death of a person. A Death Notice is different from a Funeral Notice (See Funeral Notice) and Obituary. (See Obituary)

DECEASED

(n) One in whom all physical life has ceased; (v) dead.

DIRECT CREMATION

Cremation of a deceased person without a funeral service taking place beforehand.

DISBURSEMENTS

Disbursements are costs that are out of the control of the funeral director. These usually include newspaper notices, church and clergy fees, and cemetery and crematorium costs.

DISPLAY ROOM/SELECTION ROOM

A room in a funeral home in which caskets and coffins are displayed for selection.

EMBLAMER

An embalmer is a person who has attained qualifications specifically for embalming. They have acquired the technical skills to embalm a deceased person and can also undertake complex reconstructive work, necessary when a deceased person has been physically traumatised prior to death.

EMBALMING

The process of preserving a deceased person by means of sanitizing and circulating a preservative embalming fluid through the veins and arteries.

ENTOMBMENT

Placement of a deceased person in a casket/coffin into an aboveground structure called a mausoleum.

EXECUTOR

The executor of a Will is responsible for carrying out the wishes of a person after they die. The role of the executor is to manage the estate within the terms of the Will and protect the assets of the estate. The executor of an estate must comply with various laws and rules that govern the administration of deceased estates.

EXHUME

To remove human remains from the place of burial.

FAMILY CAR / MOURNING CAR

A limousine or sedan for the use of the immediate family for transportation to the service venue, cemetery or crematorium.

FAMILY ROOM

A specially arranged room in a funeral home, designed to provide the family privacy on the day of the funeral service.

FLORAL TRIBUTE

Flowers displayed at a funeral service that have been sent by family and friends.

FLOWER RACKS / STANDS

Metal or wooden racks/stands used outside of venues for the storage of delivered flowers.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

A professional person who provides competent and empathetic support with the arrangement of a funeral or memorial service, and the respectful care and preparation of the deceased person. (Sometimes referred to as an Undertaker).

FUNERAL HOME / FUNERAL PALOUR

A business that provides funeral services to the community including arranging funeral services and caring for the deceased person. Some funeral homes have a chapel on their premises.

FUNERAL NOTICE

This is a notice in the classified section of a newspaper, or on the internet, publicizing the death of a person and giving the details of the funeral or memorial service that the family wish to have published. A Funeral Notice is different from a Death Notice (See Death Notice) and an Obituary. (See Obituary)

FUNERAL SERVICE

A ceremony held after a person's death to honour their life. (See Memorial Service)

GRAVE

An excavation in the earth for the purpose of burying a deceased person.

GRAVE LINER

A structure made of concrete, metal or wood that is placed inside the grave to prevent the collapse of a grave before burial, and/or as an extra precaution in protecting the deceased person from the elements.

GRAVE MARKER

A temporary method of identifying the occupant of a grave, usually using a wooden cross, until such time as a permanent headstone or plaque is put in place.

GRAVESIDE SERVICE

A funeral service conducted at the grave site.

GUARD OF HONOUR

If the deceased person was a member of the Defence or Emergency Services, community organisation or club, the members attending the service may wish to form a guard of honour, as a mark of respect. This involves a group of people arranging themselves in either one or two rows to honour the deceased person, as their casket/coffin is being moved. Most commonly, this happens at the end of the funeral service when the casket/coffin is being moved to the hearse, or alternatively approaching the graveside.

HEADSTONE / GRAVESTONE / TOMBSTONE / CORNERSTONE

A headstone is also known as a gravestone, tombstone or cornerstone. They are made of various materials including marble, granite, bronze, sandstone and concrete. They are placed at the head of a grave and inscribed with details of the deceased person including their name, dates of birth and death and sometimes quotes and religious scriptures.

HEARSE

A vehicle designed and used to carry the casket/coffin from the service location to the cemetery or crematorium.

HOSPICE

Hospice is a unique type of care for people with advanced illness and their family. Patients receive treatment (known as palliative care) to assist with pain relief and other symptoms, and also psychological and spiritual care. Sometimes a facility that provides this specialised care is referred to as a 'Hospice'.

INQUEST

An inquest is a court hearing conducted by a coroner to gather more information about the cause and

circumstances of a death. Coroners may also make recommendations aimed at preventing similar deaths in the future. An inquest is not a trial and there is no jury.

INTERMENT

The placing of a deceased person in a grave or burial chamber.

LOWERING DEVICE

A mechanism used for lowering a casket/coffin into a grave. Two or more straps are placed over the open grave to support the casket/coffin, and upon release of the mechanism the straps unwind from cylinders and slowly lower the casket/coffin into the grave.

MAUSOLEUM

An above-ground structure or building, often in a cemetery, that holds caskets and remains.

MEMORIAL GUEST BOOK

A Memorial Guest Book allows those attending the funeral service to record their attendance. There is also space for entering other data such as name, dates of birth and death of the deceased, family names, name of the officiating person, time and date of the service, and place of interment etc.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A service conducted in memory of the deceased person without the deceased person being present.

MEMORIAL WEBSITE

Memorial Websites found on-line allow families and friends to celebrate the life of a loved one by writing a life biography, sharing stories, leaving tributes, compiling photo, audio and video albums in their memory.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence is an expression used for a period of silent contemplation, reflection, meditation or prayer. The person conducting the funeral service may ask those gathered to observe 'one minute's silence' to reflect on their memories of the deceased.

MORGUE

These are usually government operated facilities, where deceased persons are held for different reasons, including identification by their next of kin, an autopsy, and pending instructions regarding arrangements for a funeral service.

MORTICIAN

A mortician is someone who prepares a deceased person's body for a funeral.

MORTUARY

A building where funeral staff provide for the care and preparation of deceased persons for their final resting place.

MOURNER

A person who is present at a funeral service out of affection or respect for the deceased person.

MOURNER'S PARTICIPATION

Encouraging mourners to take an active part in the ceremony is a way of personalising a service. Some examples are mourners are asked to wear the deceased's favourite colour, hand around coloured post-it-notes during the service for messages to be placed on the coffin, or invite mourners to write on the coffin in texta pens that are provided. Other alternatives are giving mourners a memento as they leave the service such as a sprig of rosemary which is a symbol of remembrance, a bookmark with the deceased's photo or a collection of the deceased's favourite music on a CD.

MOURNING CAR / FAMILY CAR

A limousine or sedan for the use of the immediate family for transportation to the service venue, cemetery or crematorium.

NICHE

A small space in a wall made for the placing of urns containing cremated remains, or inside a building for this purpose called a columbarium.

OBITUARY

An obituary is a news article that reports the recent death of a person, typically along with an account of the person's life and sometimes information about the upcoming funeral service. In large cities and larger newspapers, obituaries are written only for people considered significant. In local newspapers, an obituary may be published for any local resident upon death.

ORDER OF SERVICE BOOKLETS

An Order of Service Booklet is the printed document that outlines the key points in the funeral or memorial service, and is used as a lasting keepsake for family and friends.

PALLBEARERS

Family and/or friends of the deceased person who carry the casket/coffin when necessary during the funeral service.

PEDESTAL

A wooden or metal column used for placing flower arrangements, photos or personal items during a service.

PHOTO SLIDESHOW

A photo presentation made up of a collection of photos/and or videos which is usually edited to music on a DVD or USB to honour the deceased person. It can be shown before, during or after the funeral service.

PLOT

A specific area of ground in a cemetery for the purpose of burying deceased persons.

POPPY SERVICE

The RSL may conduct a funeral ritual segment for its members that highlights the services of the deceased to their country, both in conflict and in peace. Poppy services ensure that those who have given so much for us are remembered and honoured with the dignity they deserve. The service will include the deceased's service record, distribution of poppies, reading of The Ode, The Last Post, one minutes silence and Reveille/Rouse.

POST MORTEM / AUTOPSY

This is a medical procedure used to determine the cause of death, because the cause of death is unknown, or following a sudden, violent, accidental or unexpected death (including during or soon after a hospital procedure such as surgery). In most cases, a doctor or the police will refer a death to the coroner for an autopsy to be performed. In some instances, a hospital doctor will perform an autopsy to find out more about an illness or the cause of death, or to further medical research and understanding.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

Powers of Attorney allow a person to give someone else the legal authority to look after their affairs on their behalf, whilst they are still alive. An Enduring Power of Attorney is a legal document where a person of their choice can be appointed to manage their assets and financial affairs if they are unable to do so due to illness, an accident or in their absence. A Medical Power of Attorney allows them to appoint someone to make decisions about their medical treatment if they become mentally or physically incapable of deciding for themselves. Both types of Power of Attorney remain

valid until the principal (the person appointing another person to act on their behalf) either revokes the document or dies.

PREARRANGED FUNERAL

Funeral arrangements completed by an individual prior to his/her death.

PREFUNDED FUNERAL

Funding for the funeral has been arranged by an individual prior to his/her death by either funeral insurance, funeral bonds or a trust.

PREPAID FUNERAL

Funeral arrangements completed and paid for by an individual prior to his/her death.

PRE-NEED

Refers to planning and other services offered prior to, or in preparation for a death, in contrast to 'At-need' which refers to services rendered at the time of death.

RIGOR MORTIS

Rigidity caused by chemical changes in the muscles after death, causing the limbs of the corpse to become stiff and difficult to move or manipulate. This is a temporary condition and gradually dissipates.

SELECTION ROOM / DISPLAY ROOM

A room in a funeral home in which caskets and coffins are displayed for selection.

THANK YOU NOTES

This is a note expressing gratitude for the support and kindnesses extended to the deceased persons family during a stressful time. It can be on personalised stationery, a blank or pre-printed card, or sent by email.

THANK YOU NOTICE

This is a notice in the classified section of a newspaper, or on the internet, thanking those people who supported the deceased's family with a short note.

TROLLEY

The collapsible stand on which the casket/coffin can rest during a viewing and the funeral service, and can be transported in a hearse. (See Catafalque – fixed stand).
Undertaker - (See Funeral Director).

URN

A specially designed container into which cremated remains (sometimes referred to as ashes) are placed. Urns are made of various materials including marble, metal and wood.

VAULT

Above-ground vaults are concrete cells erected on a concrete slab for the interment of deceased persons. They can be purchased singly, in pairs or at a family's individual request. Underground vaults are concrete lined chambers for the interment of deceased persons.

VIEWING

A scheduled time during which a deceased person is present in an open or closed casket/coffin, when family and friends can view the body, share memories of the deceased, and lend comfort and support to each other in their grief. This usually takes place in a special room either within the funeral home or church/chapel.

VIGIL

A Roman Catholic religious service celebrated between the time of death and the funeral service, often on the day before or the evening before the funeral Mass. The vigil may take place in the home of the deceased person, at the funeral home, or in the church. A priest, deacon, or layperson may preside at this liturgy.

WAKE

Modern wakes vary from culture to culture. In Australia and New Zealand 'the wake' commonly refers to the gathering of mourners after the funeral service has taken place, to share food and drinks and offer support to the family of the deceased. In other countries, 'the wake' can refer to a scheduled time that family and friends spend with the deceased in an open or closed casket/coffin, to view the body, share memories of the deceased, and lend comfort and support to each other in their grief. (Also see Viewing)

WILL

A Will is a document that states how a person would like their assets to be distributed when they die, and the person or organisation they would like to be responsible for carrying out their wishes.