



Chances are, within the first 24 hours of your loved one's death, you will need to meet with a funeral home to begin the funeral arrangements. While you could choose to meet with us, you could also decide to meet with another funeral provider. Either way, the following information will help you prepare for what is often called "*the arrangement conference.*"

Without a doubt, this is a difficult time for you and your loved ones. Yet, it's comforting to know every member of the funeral home staff will be there to do their utmost to make this difficult time a little bit easier. The Funeral Director will guide you in making all the necessary decisions. It's good to know you are not alone.

Would You Like Someone to Go with You?

Perhaps you'd like another member of the family to come along with you. Or maybe you'd rather have a friend, or close neighbor join you in the first visit to the funeral home. While it's not necessary to bring someone with you for moral support, it can be very beneficial.

Please don't hesitate to ask someone to join you. Chances are they will be honored at your request, and gladly step up to help you during this time. When you ask, be sure to tell them that if they do not feel comfortable doing so, you'll understand.

Who is Responsible for Making the Decisions?

It's important to know exactly who is legally responsible for making the funeral arrangement decisions for a loved one. If the deceased has not expressed their wishes through a written document such as a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, or a Last Will and Testament, where the deceased has designated an agent to fulfill their wishes; then the chain of command is commonly as follows:

- **Legal Spouse/Partner**
- **Surviving Adult Child/Children**
- **Surviving Parent**
- **Surviving Adult Sibling**
- **Ex-Spouse**
- **Parent of Minor Child**

The person designated as the responsible party, whoever they may be, needs to be present to make decisions, and sign documents. If you have questions about the accepted kinship-related order of precedence, or are unclear as to who is the responsible person in funeral planning, call us.

Should Someone Else be Included in Making the Arrangements?

While assigning responsibility is an important part of funeral planning, it's also very important to include any children, friends, or other family who would like to be a part of arranging the funeral, and perhaps share in the cost of a funeral. Despite the fact that they may not have any legal decision-making rights, their input could be very valuable to the process.

Assisting in making the final funeral arrangement decisions can be very empowering, and help someone come to terms with the loss. If there are people in your life who you feel should be asked to participate, make sure you ask them. They can always decline.

Have You Gathered the Necessary Documents?

Life and death are full of legalities. When a loved one dies, it is not just an emotional matter for those left behind; it is a legal one which requires the timely completion of paperwork. The Funeral Director will tell you that the first step in caring for your loved one involves completing, and filing, the Death Certificate and Burial or Cremation permit.

These documents need to be completed as accurately as possible and if you are not prepared with the necessary information, then most of your initial meeting will be spent retrieving this information.

To assist the funeral home in preparing all the necessary documents, it's helpful to bring some of the following things with you:

- Deceased's Birth Certificate
- Deceased's Marriage Certificate
- Deceased's Military Discharge papers
- Deceased's Funeral pre-arrangements documents (if available)
- Deceased Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
- Last Will and Testament and any Codicils
- Revocable Living Trust

If you've got questions about the legal documents you should bring with you, please contact us at (830) 758-1500 .



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