

Cremation Facts for Consumers

All funeral homes are required to include in their General Price Lists a price for a “direct cremation.” **Direct Cremation** is the transfer of the deceased from the place of death to a funeral home or mortuary facility; appropriate care of the remains (usually refrigeration); securing all necessary permits and authorizations for the cremation; provision of an alternative container to encase the body during cremation (“alternative container” refers to a heavy-duty cardboard container [or cardboard/wood combination], or an unadorned cremation casket made of fiberboard); transportation of the body to the crematory; the cremation itself (i.e., the fee charged by the crematory – from \$225 to \$550, depending on the crematory used); return of the cremated remains in a secure container to the family directly or making them available for pickup at the funeral home; and all services of the funeral director and staff (the fee for professional services).

Funeral homes in the Austin area use crematories in the central Texas area, which return cremated remains in a suitable container. The families of decedents who weigh over set amounts – 200, 250, 275 or 300 pounds – will usually be charged extra by the crematory for the additional fuel necessary to cremate the body. Weight limits vary from crematory to crematory. Direct Cremation costs displayed in the **2016 Survey of Austin Area Prices of Selected Funeral Goods and Services** do **not** include the cost of an urn (which can cost as little as \$20 at a discount department store or close to \$3,000 at some funeral homes); an urn outer burial vault (which can cost up to \$1,000); any rite or ceremony; embalming; family’s use of funeral home facilities; cost of obituary; or other services of staff.

The prices in the survey do include the cost of shelter and refrigeration at most funeral homes for the 48-hour waiting period (which can be waived by a medical examiner or justice of the peace) between death and cremation, and often for a longer period. The cremation may be delayed if an autopsy is required, if the crematory to be used is so busy that it cannot quickly perform the cremation, if the paperwork is delayed, or if the family cannot immediately pay for the cremation. Funeral homes that do not include the entire charge for refrigeration in the cost of direct cremation are noted.

Some funeral homes add to their cost for direct cremation the standard charge of \$21.00 for one death certificate, which is required before the cremation can be done. Most families choose to order additional death certificates at \$4.00 each.

Urns

Urns may be purchased from a variety of sources, often at lower prices than those charged at a funeral home. Just be sure that the urn you purchase will fit in the Memorial Garden niche.

Transporting Cremated Remains

If you are taking cremated remains on a plane it is best to leave them in the box just as it came from the crematory with the official documents attached. Security requires that they be able to be x-rayed so they need to be in a non-metal container.