Valhalla
FUNERAL CHAPEL
CREMATORY AND CEMETERY
314-721-4900 • 314-863-3011

Cremation Planning Guide

Valhalla Funeral Chapel, Crematory and Cemetery · St. Louis, Missouri
Serving families since 1911

Valhalla Funeral Chapel, Crematory and Cemetery

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Welcome

Thank you for taking a few minutes to learn more about cremation. Learning about the options ahead of time — rather than in a moment of urgency — brings real peace of mind. Planning ahead is something you do for the people you love.

This guide is general information, not legal advice. It is meant to help you ask good questions and understand your choices. Nothing in this guide is a quote or a promise of price for any specific service.

What Cremation Is, Step By Step

Cremation is a process that reduces human remains to bone fragments through intense heat. In Missouri, before a cremation can take place, the law requires specific steps to confirm who the person was, how they died, and who has given permission.

In general terms, under Missouri law:

- A person entitled to custody of the body must give **written authorization for cremation**, and that authorization must show the date and time it was given. *(20 CSR 2120-2.071)*
- Missouri law identifies, in order, who counts as the **“next-of-kin”** with the right to authorize final disposition — including cremation — starting with an attorney-in-fact under a durable power of attorney for health care that grants this authority, then a surviving spouse, then surviving children, then parents, then surviving siblings, then the nearest other relative, and, if none of those are available, a coroner or medical examiner. The statute requires that person be at least 18, mentally competent, and willing to take financial responsibility for the disposition. *(RSMo § 194.119)*
- Missouri regulation generally does not permit cremation to happen immediately — it builds in a waiting period, with a limited exception if the death was caused by a communicable disease requiring isolation, in which case cremation may occur before 24 hours have passed. *(20 CSR 2120-2.071)*
- The crematory is required to keep a written cremation log and permanent records, including the deceased’s name, the authorizing person, and the date and time of cremation. *(20 CSR 2120-2.071)*

A funeral home or crematory can walk you through exactly which of these steps apply in your family’s situation, since every situation is a little different.

Your Choices

Valhalla offers four ways families can choose to move forward with cremation. **Only these four are listed here** — ask us directly about scheduling and what's involved in each.

1. **A service with the person present, then cremation.** A visitation or funeral service is held first, with your loved one present, and cremation follows afterward.
2. **Cremation with a memorial service.** Cremation takes place first, and a memorial service or gathering is held afterward to honor your loved one.
3. **Cremation with no services.** Sometimes called direct cremation — cremation takes place without a preceding ceremony.
4. **Inurnment or burial of cremated remains.** Once cremation is complete, cremated remains can be placed in a niche or buried in a cemetery plot (see "Where Remains Can Rest" below).

Valhalla is a full-service funeral home, cemetery, crematory and mausoleum, serving families since 1911. Ask us which of these options fits the way you'd like to honor your family member.

Where Remains Can Rest

After cremation, Valhalla offers these options for cremated remains:

- **Inurnment in a niche** — a niche is a place in the mausoleum where an urn with cremated remains is placed. Ask us what is available.
- **Burial of cremated remains** — in a cemetery plot on our grounds.

Ask us for a tour or more information about what's available.

Urns and Keepsakes

Urns come in many materials, sizes, and styles, and keepsakes are also available — such as jewelry or a small portion of ashes kept separately — to share among family members. We can walk you through the options in person; this guide does not include pricing.

Your Rights as a Consumer

The Federal Trade Commission's **Funeral Rule** gives you real, specific rights when you are shopping for funeral or cremation services, including:

- You have the right to a **General Price List (GPL)** — funeral homes are required to give you one to keep whenever you discuss funeral goods, services, or prices with them, free of charge. You do not have to visit in person to get pricing information over the phone.
- You have the right to **select only the goods and services you want** — except for a non-declinable basic services fee — rather than being required to buy a package.
- A funeral home **may not misrepresent** that embalming, a casket, or an outer burial container is required by law when it is not.
- If a funeral home marks up a cash-advance item (something they buy on your behalf, like flowers or an obituary notice), they may not represent that the price you're charged is their own cost.

(Source: FTC Funeral Rule, as summarized by the FTC's own "Complying with the Funeral Rule" guidance.)

Planning Ahead

Planning ahead simply means making your own arrangements in advance, rather than leaving every decision to be made later by your family. Two things tend to happen when you plan ahead: your own wishes are the ones that are carried out, written down in your own words, and the decisions get made calmly, in your own time, rather than during a difficult week.

What to decide first. Three answers make everything else easier:

- **Burial or cremation.** Almost every other decision follows from this one.
- **The kind of gathering** you would want — quiet and simple, or a full celebration of a life.

- **Where remains would rest** — a cemetery space, or a niche.

Then the personal details. A favourite song, a reading, a photograph — the small things that turn a service into a remembrance. These are the parts families are most glad to have in writing.

Write it down, and tell one person. A written wish only helps if it can be found. Keep it with your other important papers and tell one person where that is.

Talk to us when you are ready. We will go through the options at your pace, and you are not committing to anything by asking questions. Call **(314) 721-4900**.

When You Need to Make the First Call

If a loved one has passed, or you're planning for someone whose time is near, here's generally what happens when you call a funeral home or crematory. Every family's situation is a little different, and we'll walk you through exactly what applies to yours.

- **The call itself.** We'll ask where your loved one is (home, hospital, or care facility) and help coordinate next steps.
- **Who can authorize.** Missouri law sets out who has the right to authorize cremation or burial — see "What Cremation Is, Step By Step" above. We can help confirm who that is for your family.
- **What's needed.** Generally: the authorizing person's information, basic facts about your loved one, and your preference among the choices described above. We'll guide you through any required paperwork.
- **Timing.** Missouri regulation builds in a waiting period before cremation (see above); we can explain how that applies to your situation.

What to Bring or Have Ready

When you're ready to sit down with us — whether planning ahead or at the time of need — it helps to have some of this information on hand, though nothing here is required before you call:

- Full legal name, and any other names used, for your loved one (or yourself, if planning ahead)
- Date and place of birth
- Social Security number, if available
- Names of parents
- Education and military service history, if applicable
- Names of immediate family members
- Any existing pre-planning paperwork, if applicable

We're glad to help you gather this at your own pace — you don't need everything on this list to start the conversation.

A Wishes Worksheet

Use this page (or print it) to begin writing down your own wishes, and share it with the people who matter to you.

- Full legal name: _____
- Do you prefer cremation, burial, or are you undecided? _____
- If cremation: niche inurnment, burial of cremated remains, or another choice? _____
- Which of the four cremation options above appeals to you? _____
- Who do you want involved in these decisions? _____
- Any specific wishes for a service or gathering? _____
- Who should be contacted first? Name and phone: _____
- Notes: _____

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10 Good Questions to Ask Any Funeral Home or Crematory

1. Can I see your General Price List before we discuss anything else?
2. Which services are required, and which are optional?
3. Are you licensed in Missouri, and is your crematory on-site or off-site?
4. What documentation and authorization will you need from my family?
5. How long does the full process typically take, start to finish?
6. What options do you offer for where cremated remains can rest?
7. Can I put my wishes in writing with you, and get a copy to keep?
8. If my family's plans change later, how do we update what is on file?
9. Can you give me a written copy of everything we agree on?
10. Who can I call with questions after the arrangements are made?

We're Here

Valhalla Funeral Chapel, Crematory and Cemetery has served St. Louis families since 1911 — a full-service funeral home, cemetery, crematory and mausoleum, all on the grounds.

If you have questions, or would like to talk through your family's options, call us at **314-721-4900**. There's no pressure — we're simply here if you'd like to talk.

This guide is general information only and is not legal advice. Laws and individual circumstances vary; please confirm current requirements directly with Valhalla or a licensed attorney.

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Valhalla Funeral Chapel, Crematory and Cemetery · St. Louis, Missouri
Office hours Monday to Friday, 9 AM to 3 PM. Closed Saturday and Sunday.
General educational information, not legal advice.