

# Choices

## Oak Hill Cemetery Association

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## A GUIDE TO A CREMATION BURIAL AT OAK HILL CEMETERY

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*From Native American Proverbs & Wisdom*

We are made from Mother Earth  
and we go back to Mother Earth. – Shenandoah

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The tradition of a cremation burial is not new. In this country, the practice was common among many Native American groups. It became more common to the rest of the population of the United States after the Civil War for it allowed you the option of keeping your loved ones with you until you re-established a permanent home.

From a practical point of view, the building of European style mausoleums, especially in densely populated areas meant less land would need to be set aside for traditional burial.

*Your loved one has requested this option, or you are making the arrangements for a time of need or future cremation burial.* The reasons behind this decision are as varied as the options you have in making the arrangements. Whether you are planning on having a *traditional funeral gathering and service* or a simple, *private family only grave side goodbye*, your funeral director or cremation society should be able to assist you with any questions or concerns you have. Rules and Regulations vary with each cemetery location so be sure to include them in you plans as well.

You have the cremains or ashes (whichever term you are comfortable with) in your possession.

*You have chosen a small private family grave side only goodbye and may not need to use the services of a funeral director.*

Here are a few things you will need to do.

1. **Contact the Cemetery.** There is paperwork to complete. Every burial (cremation or full body) requires the responsible person (family member, friend or funeral director) to **complete an Order for Interment**. This provides the information that will indicate you no longer have the cremains in your possession, and that you agree on the burial location etc.

2. **Determine the burial location.** Do you already have interment rights to a burial space? **Be prepared to show that you are the owner of these interment rights, by purchase or by inheritance, or that you are the person who can legally grant permission for this burial.** If there are several family members who may have a claim to a family space there is a form to be completed that indicates who the responsible party will be for any disputes on the rights to burial spaces. This may be unnecessary in most families, but no one once the emotional turmoil or financial responsibility of removing your loved one from a space that has the potential of a future family dispute.
3. **There are rules regarding the number of burials per burial space.** Please call Oak Hill Cemetery to discuss these rules and the purchase of additional interment rights.

### ***So let's begin:***

The location has been determined, and the paperwork is complete. But there are still choices to be made.

**The cremains may be delivered to the cemetery and the staff will inter them for you.** Discuss this arrangement with the funeral home or mortuary.

**You may bring the cremains with you and hold your own gathering to say goodbye.** Call ahead and arrange for a time and the staff will prepare the area for you, make sure the burial cavity is excavated properly and if you choose, a stand will be placed nearby for the container/urn to rest on while you are gathered. You may wish to have some private time, prayers, readings, music, or any personal tributes you prepare. Discuss any special requests you may have, and Oak Hill Cemetery will try to make accommodations or direct you to the appropriate parties.

***At the appropriate time you may place the cremains or ashes in the burial space, or someone from the staff can do this for you.***

Some families take a moment to drop in flowers, some prefer to place a handful of dirt in the space as they leave, others prefer to refill the burial space themselves. The choice is yours.

. . . and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

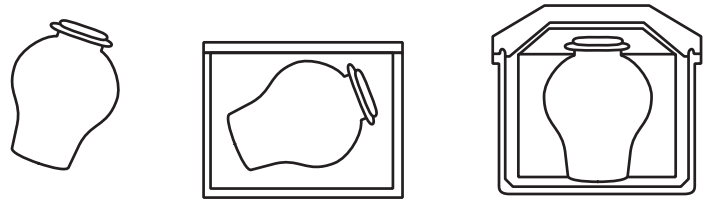
Depending on your belief or preferences you have many choices for burial. There is no right or wrong choice, these details need to be discussed, so all attending are comfortable with the decision. **Some require more pre-planning and additional costs.** Again your funeral director, mortuary, or cremation society can assist in this decision.

**Return directly to the earth.** Most cremains or ashes are packaged in a plastic bag, some within a cardboard container, others in plastic. You may place this package as is, into the grave space, or you may remove them (or ask our staff to do this) from the plastic, then bury the bag and the outer container in the same space. Some mortuaries may be prepared to place the remains in a biodegradable container which will gradually return to the earth after placement.

**Place an urn or container of your choosing into the burial cavity.** You may have already chosen an urn or container. Historically we have seen records of burials in “Grandma’s Cookie Jar” to a cardboard oatmeal tube. **Be sure you are comfortable with the choice you make and that is appropriate for the deceased and the situation. There are no “do overs” if you have regrets at a later date.**

**For added protection, you may use an unlined urn container.** This would be any form of box that will protect the urn from the weight of the ground being placed back over it. Some of these are sold as part of a package when you purchase your urn, or can be purchased independently. Depending on material, it may or may not be water resistant.

**The Standard Lined and Sealed Urn Container.** Although Oak Hill Cemetery does not require an urn vault, you do have this option. A lined urn vault will provide varying levels of protection from subsoil elements, the weight of the earth, and the weight maintenance equipment. A lined urn vault is available in high impact plastic or in concrete. We can assist you with this decision and with advance notice arrange for delivery to the cemetery.



Left: Burial of Urn in the ground with no container.

Center: Burial with an unlined urn container provides some protection from the weight of the dirt placed over it.

Right: A lined and sealed urn container with provide more protection (which still varies with ground conditons) from subsoil and equipment elements.

***There are also options where your granite marker may serve as a secure final resting place for the cremains. From flat grass level markers to benches and upright markers these choices are suited to most cemetery lots.***  
***Discuss any height and lot width restrictions with the cemetery.***

