

OPTIONS for BURIAL – you don't need a casket

What we now think of as traditional burial didn't become the tradition until the Civil War when bodies were embalmed for preservation while transported home. Embalming gives the dead a lifelike appearance a sort of morbid Madame Tussauds look and that appearance remains de rigueur in today's funeral industry. Before the Civil War, burial often took place in simple graves in tall grasses. That simplicity is beginning to make a comeback. In a poll by AARP, more than 70 percent of those asked chose green burial as the most appealing burial option.

But what is a green burial? Green burials, also called natural burials, are thought to have started in the late 1980s in the United Kingdom as a backlash against crowding limited land resources with cemeteries. While definitions of what makes a burial green vary, the idea is to eschew unnatural practices no formaldehydebased embalming, metal caskets or concrete burial vaults. You may be thinking this sounds a bit hippie; after all, if you're dead, what difference does it make if your death care is green? Think of your legacy every year 22,500 cemeteries in the United States bury:

827,060 gallons (3,130,762 liters) of embalming fluid

90,272 tons (81,893 metric tons) of steel in caskets

1,636,000 tons (1,484,154 metric tons) of reinforced concrete in vaults

More than 30 million board feet (70,792 meters³) of hardwoods (some tropical woods) for casket

OPTIONS for CREMATION – by fire or by water?

Over the past four years, cremations have surpassed burials as the most popular end-of-life option in the United States, according to the National Funeral Directors Association. At the same time, companies have been springing up touting creative things you can do with a loved one's ashes, such as pressing them into a vinyl record, using them to create a marine reef, sending them up in fireworks, or having them compressed into diamonds.

In the U.S. all cremations happen indoors at crematoriums. The big environmental concerns with this type of cremation are the amount of energy it requires, and the amount of carbon dioxide emissions it produces. Regional environmental regulations mean that most U.S. crematoriums have scrubbing or filtering systems, such as after-chambers that burn and neutralize pollutants like mercury emissions from dental fillings. Most filtration systems are focused on reducing metals and particulate matter and nitrous oxide.

However, these filters do not neutralize the CO₂ generated by cremating a body, including the gas generated as a by-product of heating that body up to 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit or more. One cremation produces an average of 534.6 pounds of carbon dioxide. Given this figure, cremations in the U.S. account for about 360,000 metric tons of CO₂ emissions each year.

For Americans who don't want to use up so much fuel or release so much carbon dioxide when they die, alkaline hydrolysis may be a more appealing option. Sometimes known as water cremation or aquamation, this way of dissolving a body in water is now legal in at least 18 states. Alkaline hydrolysis has about a tenth of the carbon footprint of conventional cremation. While the process does take a similar amount of time, it doesn't have to heat that much, and it's the water that's doing most of the work. In addition, the process releases zero emissions from the body itself.

As with cremation, there are some remains left over after alkaline hydrolysis that families can keep in an urn or scatter in a special location. And the process creates a lot of organic liquid that has some very practical uses. Some facilities capture the liquid, and it's taken away and it's used on some farmland; it's an excellent fertilizer. But most places, it just goes into the municipal sewer system. And a lot of sewer systems actually appreciate it, because it actually helps with the quality of the wastewater.

Composting Human Bodies

In the future, we'll probably see many more alternatives to cremation. This year, Washington State became the first in the U.S. to legalize a type of corpse composting called natural organic reduction, or recomposition. Starting in 2020, this process will convert bodies into useful soil that friends and family can either use or donate to the state's Puget Sound region. And across the U.S., it's legal to opt for a so-called natural burial in which the body is allowed to decompose in the ground without added chemicals, concrete, or synthetic materials. There are shrouds impregnated with mushroom spores to speed up the process. From:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/is-cremation-environmentally-friendly-heres-the-science>

For more information about Recomposing watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpGqRVJ1Lss&t=35s> 3.30 minutes

https://www.columbian.com/news/2021/jan/24/recompose-the-first-human-composting-funeral-home-in-the-u-s-is-now-open-for-business/?fbclid=IwAR1VaT7jbV3n99lBKY945rbscB_jb9BX19mqjXe7Nl7ogZPhrjgkjTJnTic

1) Mayo Clinic pioneered water cremation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Le7rLbkFe4> 1/10th the energy, shows bones left afterwards - 4.48 minutes

2) About high temp and low temp aquamation. Good information on the history -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTD0GltXB50> 3 minutes

3) Good comparison cremation by fire - 1/6th th energy --1/4th the emissions – shows shroud and shrouding board.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9HMKF_sFV8 7 minutes

=====

The Natural Burial Company sells biodegradable coffins, shrouds, shrouding boards and urns.
<https://funerals.naturalburialcompany.com/natural-coffins-caskets/>

HOW HUMAN BODIES DECOMPOSE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFJrow7yaec&has_verified=1&bpctr=1613896296
Video of Forensic Composting Grounds – fascinating!

+++++

KEEPING COSTS DOWN – Some low cost options in Portland

(1) Care Cremation Services in Gresham - Price List

Our \$595 Simple Cremation Price Includes:

- Transportation from place of death to crematory (within 25 mile radius)
- Care and refrigeration of the body (eliminates the need for embalming)
- Obtaining required authorizations, permissions and permits
- Initial notification to Social Security Administration
- Cremation performed by certified technician

Additional Optional Items:

- Alternative Containers (\$95-\$295)
- Cremation Caskets (\$495-\$3095)
- Urn or transfer container selected by the purchaser (starting at \$15)
- County required charge for any certified copies of the death certificate
- County required medical examiner fee
- Certified copies of death certificate
- Charges for special requests (i.e., mailing ashes, etc.) see below.

Mailing Cremated Remains: \$150

If you choose, we may send the ashes in the container you select to any domestic mail address you specify. For your convenience, we have established a flat rate for this service. Our mailing fee includes packaging the container appropriately for mailing (domestic), hand-carrying the packaged ashes to the **United States Postal Service** and sending the package by **priority express mail**. This can be a valuable service for those who are not able to travel or simply appreciate the convenience of having the ashes delivered somewhere else for them.

(2) Oregon Cremation Services lowest prices \$700.

(3) Affordable Funeral Alternatives

<https://affordablefuneralalternatives.com/> Oregon area code

DIRECT CREMATION – \$420-\$1950

Our charge for a direct cremation (without funeral home involvement in **ANY** type of service) includes removal of remains from place of death within 30 mile radius of Gresham, transportation to crematory, cremation of persons 300lbs or less, basic services of the Funeral Director, staff, overhead and necessary authorizations. If you want to arrange a direct cremation, you can use an alternative container. Alternative containers encase the body and can be made of materials like fiberboard or composition materials (with or without an outside covering).

The containers we provide are cardboard.

1. Direct cremation with casket/container provided by family (in addition to cost of casket/container) – \$420
 2. Direct cremation with fiberboard container – \$525
 3. Direct cremation with selected cremation casket from our facility – \$525-\$1950
-

AQUA CREMATION – \$755 , With silk shroud \$855. Can accommodate up to 500 pounds. Includes plastic urn.

