

How Funeral Directors Can Support Oregon Families Who Wish to Direct or Participate in Care for Their Own Dead

“The most important support funeral directors can provide home funeral families is the compassionate understanding that this is something families feel called to do for their loved one and themselves, their friends, and community. Home funeral families by and large are looking for simplicity, self-reliance, personal responsibility, and a shared, intimate experience that only they can conceive of and conduct.”

—Lee Webster, National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA)
“How Funeral Directors Can Support Home Funeral Families”

Oregon families have the legal right to custody and control of their own dead. Whether the death was anticipated or unanticipated, once time and cause of death are established, the family may choose to care for and transport the body, file the 24-hour notice of death and death certificate, arrange for disposition, and conduct any other aspect of after-death care. Families choosing to conduct a home funeral may do so without assistance from a funeral director or may prefer to have a funeral director handle some but not all of these tasks.

How can funeral directors assist families who choose home funerals?

Please see also: “How Funeral Directors Can Support Home Funeral Families” for 12 categories of services and goods funeral homes can offer to support home funeral families. Written by Lee Webster and published by the National Home Funeral Alliance, www.homefuneralalliance.org.

Legal Authority of Families in Oregon

In Oregon, the legislative authority for families to act as unpaid funeral services practitioners is found in [ORS 432.005\(23\)\(a\)](http://ORS.leg.state.or.us/ORS432/005/023/001.htm):

SYSTEM OF VITAL STATISTICS

432.005 Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise:

(23) “Person acting as a funeral service practitioner” means:

- (a) A person other than a funeral service practitioner licensed under ORS 692.045, including but not limited to a relative, friend or other interested party, who performs the duties of a funeral service practitioner without payment;

Information to Provide Families

- Families wanting to handle their own paperwork should request a packet from Oregon Health Authority’s Center for Health Statistics Registration Unit, 971-673-1160.
- Oregon Funeral Resources & Education www.oregonfuneral.org
- National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA) www.homefuneralalliance.org
- Funeral Consumers Alliance www.funerals.org