



Glossary of Funeral Service Terms

*Here are some definitions that may be helpful to you
when planning funeral services*

- **Benediction** ~ Closing blessing delivered at the end of a service
- **Burial Vault vs. Grave Liner** ~ While not mandatory by the state or local law, vaults or grave liners are usually required by most cemeteries. While both are containers that the casket is to be placed inside of underground, only *burial vaults* come with the ability to seal as protection from the earth and elements.
- **Casket vs. Coffin** ~
 1. A **casket** is the contemporary norm. It is a rectangular, four-sided box with a lid (either one-piece or split into two for viewing) and handles. Caskets can be gasketed (sealable to protect against the elements) or non-gasketed.
 2. A **coffin** is an older, traditional style of burial container. It is anthropoidal (human-shaped—wider at the shoulders and narrower at the feet) and has mostly been replaced in popularity by the casket.
- **Celebration of Life (Memorial Service)** ~ This is a type of funeral service *without* the body present (no viewing) but may include the presence of an urn/cremated remains. Can be religious or secular. These services allow more of a focus on celebrating the way the deceased lived rather than mourning their absence.
- **Celebrant vs. Clergy** ~ A *celebrant* is the officiant for a secular (non-religious) service. *Clergy*, such as a pastor or rabbi, perform religious ceremonies.
- **Cemetery vs. Graveyard vs. Memorial Garden (Park)** ~
 1. A **cemetery** (derived from the Greek *koimeterion*, meaning "sleeping place") refers to any burial ground not attached to a church. These standalone properties are typically larger, open to the public, and not associated with a specific religious affiliation.
 2. A **graveyard** historically refers to a burial plot situated directly on the campus of a church, with burials typically restricted to members of that specific congregation or faith.
 3. A **memorial garden or park** is a modern cemetery designed to resemble a manicured park. It strictly utilizes flush-to-the-ground (flat) bronze or granite markers to maintain an open, natural landscape.

- **Cremation** ~ A fire-based method for disposition of human remains
- **Death Certificate (Vital Statistics)** ~ A legal document required for historical record-keeping, as well as managing probate, legal affairs, and financial accounts. To complete this document, the funeral home will collect the following vital statistics:
 1. Full legal name(s) (Maiden, if any)
 2. Dates of Birth and Death
 3. Place of Birth
 4. SSN
 5. Ethnic/Cultural Heritage
 6. Parents' Names (Including mother's maiden)
 7. Marital Status (Spouse, if any)
 8. Next of Kin/Informant
 9. Highest Degree of Education
 10. Occupation held for majority of life

In the state of Florida, there are **2** types of death certificates:

- **Short-form**- Does *Not* include *Cause of Death*. Used for properties, assets, and general business matters. You will typically need this for:
 - **Courthouse** (One copy per deed of property)
 - **DMV**: mobile home, car, truck, boat, trailer, motorcycle, etc.
 - **Bank**: Checking/Savings/Money Market/ Trust Accounts, CDs, Safety Deposit Box, etc. (*Needed even if someone else is named on account*)
 - **Estate** (One copy for Probate. *Check with attorney*)
 - **Federal Income Taxes**
 - **Stocks** (One copy per company of Mutual Funds. *Varies by account, check with broker*)
 - **Utilities**: Electric Company, Gas Company, Cable/Phone Company, Credit Card Company, P.O. Box, etc. (*These places may take copies*)
- **Long-form**- Includes *Cause of Death*. Used strictly for medical, legal, and insurance-related matters. You will typically need this for:
 - **Life Insurance** (One copy per company/policy)
 - **Annuities/Pensions**
 - **Retirement Programs/401(k)**
 - **Social Security Administration** (We notify SSA)
 - **VA Benefits**
 - **Investments**

- **Direct Cremation** ~ A basic service consisting solely of the cremation process and the immediate care of the deceased, with no formal ceremonies, visitations, or public viewing.
- **Fingerprint Keepsakes** ~ A type of memorial item engraved or imprinted with the deceased's fingerprint. May include jewelry, touchstones, pocket knives, etc.
- **Funeral Service** ~ An umbrella term that means the body *will be present* at the service, with or without viewing.
May include (but is not limited to): visitation/viewing, formal speaker(s), clergy/celebrant, both chapel/church service as well as graveside service.
- **Graveside Service** ~ A ceremony performed entirely at the cemetery burial plot, without a prior formal service or visitation at a funeral home or church. It can include music, prayers, readings, and words from clergy or a celebrant.
May include: celebrant/clergy, speakers, music/poem, etc.
- **ID Viewing** ~ A private, brief opportunity (typically 30 minutes to an hour) for immediate family members (usually limited to 10 people or fewer) to view and say goodbye to their loved one prior to cremation. Because this occurs within 48 hours of passing, formal embalming is generally not required under normal circumstances.
- **Immediate Burial** ~ The straightforward underground burial of the deceased performed independently by the funeral home staff, without any formal services, visitations, or family present.
- **Keepsakes vs. Charms** ~ Varying in shape and size, *keepsakes* are smaller than the standard-size urn, only holding a portion of cremated remains. *Charms* hold an even smaller portion of cremated remains, used mostly for jewelry.
- **Memorial Service (Celebration of Life)** ~ This is a type of funeral service *without* the body present (no viewing) but may include the presence of an urn/cremated remains. Can be religious or secular. These services allow more of a focus on celebrating the way the deceased lived rather than mourning their absence.
- **Order of Service** ~ The printed outline that guides clergy/celebrant, funeral director, family, and guests through the ceremony. The following is an example:
 1. Musical Prelude
 2. Processional
 3. Opening Welcome and Prayer
 4. Hymn/Music/Video/etc.
 5. Scripture Reading(s)
 6. Eulogy/Tributes (*guest speakers are typically allowed 3-5 minutes, if there is an open invitation to the public to allow sharing of memories **make sure people are willing to stand up and speak***)
 7. Obituary Reading
 8. Closing Prayer/Benediction
 9. Recessional
 10. Final Song

- **Prayer Cards vs. Service/Memorial Folders** ~ While both are funeral keepsakes, these two options differ in size and purpose.

Prayer cards are small (usually 2.5x4.5in), double-sided cards used for prayers/poems (often seen at Catholic services).

Memorial or service folders are larger (ranging from 4x5.5in to standard full sheet 8x11in), folded, and may include the order of service, obituary, photograph(s), prayer/poem, etc.