



## FAQs: FUNERAL AND BURIAL INSTRUCTIONS

### ***Who should have them?***

Everyone eighteen and older needs them to ensure that their death will not create any more problems than necessary.

### ***What do they do?***

They allow you to provide guidance to your survivors on the details of your final arrangements. Those who will be making these decisions will be trying to do what you would have wanted. This document allows you to tell them what you want and even binds those involved to carry out those wishes.

### ***Where do I keep them?***

We recommend keeping them in your estate notebook. You also need to give copies to all family members who sign it and to your attorney. Your attorney will put the document with your other important documents in his/her fireproof safe.

### ***When do I renew it?***

It is designed to be enforceable as long as your *Last Will and Testament (Will)*. When your *Will* becomes outdated, after 20 years, it does not become unenforceable, just ineffective. Thus, the *After-Death Instructions* are still valid and will guide your survivors, although, the odds are that some of the information will need updating to match your current situation. Optimally, you will be periodically updating the instructions as necessary. At the least, you need to revise the document every 20 years along with your *Will*. The amount of grief and confusion your survivors experience is directly related to the amount of time and effort you put into providing meaningful guidance.

### ***Why do I need to write my wishes down, isn't it enough to tell my family what I want?***

Oral instructions are better than nothing, but not much. If you express your wishes this way, there may be confusion and fighting because what people are told and what they remember is often not the same thing. Another possibility is that your wishes may change and you neglect to inform every one of these changes. Those who are unaware of these changes may put unnecessary pressure on other family members who are aware of your new desires. Fights over these types of issues may cause rifts in the family that last for generations. This may be avoided by putting your instructions in writing.

### ***How do you revoke it?***

You may do this in a couple of ways. First, you may create a handwritten document that amends your *Will* by revoking any *After-Death Instructions* created before the date of the handwritten document. All you need to do is sign and date the document and attach it to your *Will*. If your attorney has your original *Will* in his fireproof safe, you need to send the original amendment to the attorney. Second, you may physically destroy all copies. Either way you will need to create new instructions at the same time to maintain this high level of protection.

***How does it reduce the stress and grief related to my death?***

The death of a loved one is a very trying time. There will be sadness and confusion. At the same time, there will be things that need to be done. Forcing decisions on shaken friends or family compounds the problems. Most of the decisions they will be asked to make may be made by you ahead of time. By writing these instructions down and informing your family of them, we guarantee that you will reduce stress and grief felt by those who act on your behalf.

***How do I select the person or persons who will handle my final arrangements?***

Usually clients choose their parents, children, brothers, sisters, a good friend or a business associate. It is usually better to choose someone other than the spouse because he/she will probably be hardest hit by the loss. We recommend choosing the strongest of family members or friends as to reduce the impact on those who are less capable of dealing with the situation.

***Do I pay this person for helping me?***

That is up to you, but we recommend you do not compensate this person unless the time and effort required is significant. All the out of pocket expenses made on your behalf will be reimbursed out of your estate by the personal representative or your trustee.

***What may be done if a friend or family member refuses to honor the instructions?***

It depends on whether this person signed the *After-Death Instructions*. If this was done, they are bound to follow the instructions. Even if they did not sign the instructions, they should have signed the *Integrity Agreement*. This means any discomfort must be discussed immediately and usually will end up in a mutually satisfying solution.

***What relationship will the person selected have with my estate planning attorney?***

If you have an existing attorney, this person should confer with the attorney as soon as possible to be made aware of your objectives, assets, liabilities, family circumstances and other necessary information, so the attorney is able to perform his/her charge. The attorney is there to help the survivors and ensure that your wishes are carried out.

***How do my survivors know who to inform of my death?***

You need to leave them a list of the people you want to be told and in what manner. It is also helpful to include a list of people you want invited to your memorial and/or wake if this differs from the initial list. A systematic approach to spreading this information greatly assists those responsible for doing so.

**For additional information call: (602) 252-5110**

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