

# Final Journey...

(A Brief Note on Checklists to handle the End-of-Life Situations)

By

Prasad Thotakura  
Dallas, TX

*(817) 300-4747 (M)*  
[\*prasadthotakura@gmail.com\*](mailto:prasadthotakura@gmail.com)

(This is the author's compilation of personal study, hands-on handling of such experiences over a two decade period in USA. Several basic elements are common to most of the states in USA and minor variations can be addressed via local funeral homes and local governmental agencies)

## Final Journey...

*"jAtasya hi dhruvo mRtyuH  
dhruvaM janma mRtasya ca,  
tasmAd aparihArye 'rthe na tvaM socitum arhasi"*

*(Bhagavad Gita 2.27)*

*"Death is CERTAIN of that which is BORN;  
BIRTH is CERTAIN of that which is DEAD.  
You should NOT therefore LAMENT over the INEVITABLE."*

As quoted in epic Hindu scripture Bhagavad Gita, ***Death is Inevitable and Certain.*** It is at this critical time in ones life that one has to develop the necessary strength and courage to face the situation and do what is expected in the age old cycle of human life – the funeral process of disposing the human body.

In our life overseas we face this situation several times in the community we live in. Unlike in India where the necessary infrastructure is readily available conducive to the Indian life conditions, it is not so easy in other countries. The local customs and infrastructure is geared to handle all such situations but may not be amenable for Indian way funeral handling/services.

It is not uncommon for anyone having any close contacts with funeral homes until it is absolutely necessary. When it is needed, family members will be in shock with blanked-out minds, can't think straight and get panic to make proper final arrangements for their loved ones. Some funeral homes try to extract as much money as they could depend on the situation. Choosing the right funeral home is the key to have respectable last rites to loved ones. The quicker we provide the following information, the faster the funeral homes can provide needed services. Very few States allow family members to take the deceased home if a person dies some place else other than at home. Deceased will be transported directly from the place of death to the funeral home of family's choice. All funeral homes may not have Crematorium/Burial facilities but may have agreements with near by funeral homes. Family members have right to choose whatever the facility they wanted.

**Information required for funeral services in the USA**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of the deceased
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Birth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age
<input type="checkbox"/>	Birth Place
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Security
<input type="checkbox"/>	Race
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marital Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Surviving Spouse (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decedent's usual occupation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kind of Business/Industry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Residence Address
<input type="checkbox"/>	Father's Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mother's Maiden Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	Place of Death - Hospital/Nursing Home/Residence/Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	County of Death
<input type="checkbox"/>	City/Town
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of Hospital
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of the Informant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Informant's Mailing address
<input type="checkbox"/>	Method of Disposition – Burial/Cremation/Removal from State/Donation/Other

**Note:** *Funeral home staff will contact hospital authorities to obtain medical reports and County officials to get death certificates, permits etc.*

**Information required to send the deceased to Abroad**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Passport of deceased
<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial Permit/Transit Permit
<input type="checkbox"/>	One certified copy of the death certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	A letter of preparation on funeral home letterhead stating the remains have been hermetically sealed within a zinc lined wooden container (must be notarized)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter of 'non-contagious' disease from the department of Health (with official raised seal)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No casket requirements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Zinc lined outer wood box
<input type="checkbox"/>	If a homicide, a letter of permission to ship from the Police department involved in the investigation and the District Attorney's office
<input type="checkbox"/>	All documents requires one photocopy
<input type="checkbox"/>	No consul inspection required. Consulate fee is \$21.00 (estimated)

**Note:** *Funeral home staff will contact concerned officials, airlines and coordinate in getting all the necessary documents to transport the body to overseas provided they have all the required information from the family in a timely manner. It is estimated that it would cost around \$5,000 to \$8,000 to send deceased to Asian countries depending on the different logistics.*

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### Services provided by Funeral Homes

*Usually, most of the funeral homes provide these following services like,*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport the body from hospital/home/out of state to the funeral home
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make arrangements with hospital/county officials to get death certificates
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refrigerate the body
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrangements for viewing/memorial services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dressing, cosmetology services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Embalming
<input type="checkbox"/>	Memorial book
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flower arrangements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chapel/Priestly services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Escort
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cremation Urns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary storage of cremation Urns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casket types – Bronze/Hardwood/Stainless Steel/Steel/Cloth covered wood/Card Board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Car (Limousine) /Pallbearer Car (Limousine) /Funeral Coach (Hearse) /Service Vehicle/Flower Car

**Note:** Embalming is not required by law. Embalming may be necessary, however, if you select certain funeral arrangements, such as a funeral with viewing. If you don't want embalming, you usually have the right to choose an arrangement that doesn't require you to pay for it, such as direct cremation or immediate burial.