

Glossary of Terms For Funeral Arrangements

Courtesy of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Cemetery and Funeral Bureau

Alternative Container

An unfinished wood box or other non-metal receptacle without ornamentation, often made of fiberboard, pressed wood or composition materials, and generally lower in cost than caskets.

Casket/Coffin

A box or chest for burying remains.

Cemetery Property

A grave, crypt or niche.

Cemetery Services

Opening and closing graves, crypts or niches; setting grave liners and vaults; setting markers; and long-term maintenance of cemetery grounds and facilities.

Columbarium

A structure with niches (small spaces) for placing cremated remains in urns or other approved containers. It may be outdoors or part of a mausoleum.

Cremation

Exposing remains and the container encasing them to extreme heat and flame and processing the resulting bone fragments to a uniform size and consistency.

Crypt

A space in a mausoleum or other building to hold cremated or whole remains.

Disposition

The placement of cremated or whole remains in their final resting place.

Endowment Care Fund

Money collected from cemetery property purchasers and placed in trust for the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery.

Entombment

Burial in a mausoleum.

Funeral Ceremony

A service commemorating the deceased, with the body present.

Funeral Services

Services provided by a funeral director and staff, which may include consulting with the family on funeral planning; transportation, shelter, refrigeration and embalming of remains; preparing and filing notices; obtaining authorizations and permits; and coordinating with the cemetery, crematory or other third parties.

Funeral Planning Society

See Memorial Society.

Grave

A space in the ground in a cemetery for the burial of remains.

Grave Liner or Outer Container

A concrete cover that fits over a casket in a grave. Some liners cover tops and sides of the casket. Others, referred to as vaults, completely enclose the casket. Grave liners minimize ground settling.

Graveside Service

A service to commemorate the deceased held at the cemetery before burial.

Interment

Burial in the ground, inurnment or entombment.

Inurnment

The placing of cremated remains in an urn.

Mausoleum

A building in which remains are buried or entombed.

Memorial Service

A ceremony commemorating the deceased, without the body present.

Memorial Society

An organization that provides information about funerals and disposition, but is not part of the state-regulated funeral industry.

Niche

A space in a columbarium, mausoleum or niche wall to hold an urn.

Urn

A container to hold cremated remains. It can be placed in a columbarium or mausoleum, or buried in the ground.

Vault

A grave liner that completely encloses a casket.

You can file a complaint with the FTC by contacting the Consumer Response Center by phone: toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357); TDD: 202-326-2502; by mail: Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20580; or through the Internet, using the [online complaint form](#). Although the Commission cannot resolve individual problems for consumers, it can act against a company if it sees a pattern of possible law violations. The FTC publishes free brochures on many consumer issues. For a [complete list of publications](#), write for **Best Sellers**, Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20580; or call toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357), TDD 202-326-2502.