



What is an Arrangement Conference?

First of all, an arrangement conference is a time for a recently bereaved family to sit down with a funeral director and discuss the details of a lost loved one's meaningful tribute and final disposition. Secondly, it's an opportunity for the funeral director to get to know you better and learn how to best honor your loved one. The funeral director will represent the funeral home chosen either by you and your family at the time of need or by your lost loved one through a funeral prearrangement plan.

In order to reduce confusion and stress, the more prepared a family is for the arrangement conference the better. That said, the arrangement conference has three main goals.

1. The family shares necessary information about their lost loved one so that the funeral director can take care of essential paperwork, like the death certificate, obituary, and insurance.
2. Decisions are made regarding the best way to [remember and honor the lost loved one](#).
3. The most fitting funeral and [burial options](#) are chosen.

Typically, the conference takes place the day of or the day after a death, and it's best to set aside 2-3 hours to ensure that you have enough time. Ideally, the funeral director will explain all

funeral service and memorial options, service and merchandising options, coordination with a church and cemetery ([or other desired location](#) for the service), selection of music, how to secure musicians and order flowers, and more.

Also, prepare to discuss payment details. The subject will come up in the arrangement conference.



What will the funeral home assist me with?

The funeral home will assist your family in every way possible. But, here are a few of the primary ways they will assist you:

- Setting the date and time for a service
- Coordinating services with the cemetery, crematory and airline (if needed)
- Monument and inscription services
- Flowers
- Newspaper notices/obituary
- Filing the death certificate and ordering certified copies
- Assisting in the application for veterans' benefits, Social Security benefits, and/or life insurance benefits



What are some questions I should be prepared to answer?

Your funeral director will be able to explain all the options that are available to you as well as answer any questions that you have. However, you may want to come to the arrangement conference with some idea what your family will want for your loved one's service. Consider these questions:

- Where and when should services be held?
- Do you want to publish an obituary, and if you do, who will write it and where will it be published?
- In lieu of flowers, do you want to offer charitable contributions as an option?
- Do you need to choose a cemetery or other final resting place?
- Do you need to make arrangements for a monument or grave marker?
- What kind of funeral service is most appropriate for your lost loved one? Simple? Elaborate? Public? Private? Religious?
- What's the best way to honor and memorialize your lost loved one?
- Should there be a viewing, [visitation](#), funeral service, committal service?
- If there is a service, who will participate? Musicians, speakers, pallbearers?
- Do you want floral arrangements present, and [if so, what kind](#)?
- Will the final disposition be burial, [cremation](#), or another type of interment?
- [Will the body be present](#) at the funeral or memorial service?
- If applicable, open or closed casket?

- Do you know someone who will act as officiant, or will you need the funeral home's assistance?



What should I bring?

Honestly, the more information you bring, the smoother the meeting will be (and the less documentation you will need to bring back at a later time). This list is fairly comprehensive and gives you an excellent place to start. However, the funeral home may ask you for something not included below.

- Your loved one's vital statistics information
 - Full legal name (including suffixes)
 - Social Security number
 - Date and place of birth
 - Date and place of death
 - Spouse's full legal name (if applicable)
 - Mother's full legal name
 - Father's full legal name
 - Home address
 - Highest education level/education history
 - Work/professional history
 - Details about any hobbies, interests, honors, awards, clubs, or organizations

- Military documents to determine [veterans' burial benefits](#) (Form DD-214, if applicable)
- Obituary information (or [come with an obituary already written](#))
- Service details/times (as much information as possible)
- List of survivors
- Recent photo for the cosmetologist if embalming is chosen
- Photos for memorial cards, obituary, memorial tribute video, etc.
- Life insurance policies
- Cemetery deeds (if applicable)
- Any written funeral prearrangement plan/wishes
- Legal [will](#) (if applicable)
- Employee benefits information (if applicable)
- Clothing for your loved one (if there is to be a viewing, consider including glasses, lipstick, perfume, nail polish, jewelry, etc.)
- List of 6-8 pallbearers (if applicable) – the funeral home can assist with additional pallbearers if needed



Some Final Tips

First of all, *prepare as much as you can ahead of time*. You can gather necessary documents, clothing and personal items, details for the obituary, and photos to be used in the service ahead of time.

Secondly, *don't feel rushed during the conference*. Remember, the funeral director is there to help you with all your needs and is ready to serve you fully.

Thirdly, *ask as many questions as you need*. As you plan a tribute for your loved one, the funeral director is there to be a knowledgeable and available partner in a difficult situation. Make use of their experience and ask as many questions as you need.

Finally, *take notes*. You will receive a lot of information during the arrangement conference, and it's unlikely you will be able to remember it all. Take a notepad with you and make sure to write things down.