



DCSD

Debt Counsel for Seniors & the Disabled

Do You Feel the Need for Pre-Need?

By Eugene Cooney, President

Funeral Directors Services Association of Greater Chicago

Throughout our entire lives we plan and prepare for upcoming events and milestones. Birthdays, bar mitzvahs, christenings and weddings, etc. Little time or thought is given when planning our own funerals. It is a sensitive matter – but then again, it is a fact and a destination of life.

You may ask yourself what kind of person makes arrangements for their own funeral. The answer is a smart person who often thinks of others before thinking of themselves.

A pre-need arrangement is buying, in advance, funeral services and burial merchandise that you will select yourself. You will enter a pre-need contract with a funeral home where, upon payment, most costs will be guaranteed.

The obvious advantage is to the price-conscious consumer. The average funeral today costs nearly \$8,000. In a few decades that cost may double. You can pay today's prices for future services. Other advantages are having time to make certain decisions, having peace of mind knowing that your wishes will be granted and relieving family members of having to make rash decisions and eventually facing the burden of paying for the funeral.

There are many decisions that have to be made during funeral arrangements and you can ask yourself who will be making these decisions when you are gone. Like anything in the world of business, it is wise to be an educated consumer. There are many hidden costs and fees out there when planning a funeral. Among these are funeral home costs, cemetery costs, headstone, luncheon costs, etc. The best advice would be to go directly to your preferred funeral provider and ask him what is involved in the arrangement process.

If you don't have a preferred funeral provider you should shop around in advance and compare prices.

Spend an hour with the director and go over all aspects of the event. Most people do not have cemetery arrangements nor do they realize the cost. People can pre-arrange everything from the type of casket, cemetery choice, pall bearers and what they want to be dressed in.

Almost as important as revising your will, make your wishes and thoughts be known to your loved ones. Do you want a cremation or burial? Do you want an open or closed casket? Do you want an honor guard at the cemetery? The choice made by you will be guaranteed.

Some pre-arranged funerals are required when people can no longer care for themselves and need to be cared for by a nursing home. While applying to a nursing home they will ask you first off if the applicant has pre-funded funeral arrangements made yet and if not they would recommend that you make them.

Some elderly people faced with the possibility of entering a nursing home have to spend down their assets in order to qualify for public aide. Pre-funding the funeral arrangements is highly recommended.

Educating yourself on the subject of pre-arranged funerals should not be limited to senior citizens. If one is selected as a power of attorney, a power of attorney for health care or an executor of a will they should be informed of a person's funeral situation. Many elderly forget if they made arrangements. Some do make arrangements and do not fund them. It is not a nice surprise to find out too late that funeral costs are due after thinking otherwise.

Funeral homes do not accept payment plans. Funerals are often sudden and a large payment is due immediately.

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This can be a stressful and embarrassing moment for many families. Many people do not have life insurance that helps pay for funeral costs.

No matter what your age, do your homework on yourself and your loved ones. Don't wait for the teacher to collect your unfinished work. Make a phone call. Visit your funeral provider. Select your cemetery where your loved ones are and it is of your religious preference. Don't wait forever.

All arrangements should be made with a licensed funeral provider and supervised under the authority of state and federal regulatory guidelines.

Why Prearrange a Funeral or Burial?

Courtesy of the International Cemetery and Funeral Association, Reston, Virginia / www.IFCA.org

- You are able to compare the many options available and make an informed decision about your funeral and cemetery arrangements, and make choices that are meaningful to both you and your family.
- You gain peace of mind knowing your family and friends will be relieved of the emotional and financial burden often associated with making arrangements when a death occurs.
- By prefunding your funeral and cemetery services, a guaranteed price contract will allow you to purchase at today's prices, free from inflationary pressures in the future.

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All information in this issue of the DCSD Newsletter can be found in the "Senior Citizen's Guide to Chicago."

Refer DCSD to a Friend!

Do you know someone who is suffering in silence like you once were? Help a friend, neighbor, relative or other loved one achieve peace of mind and restore dignity in his or her life. Help US by distributing DCSD cards around your community and make others aware of the service that has been helping you restore dignity to YOUR life! We'd love to talk to anyone whom you think would benefit from our service.

Please give your friends and loved ones DCSD cards.

Please call (800) 992-3275 for DCSD cards.

Important Message about Creditor Letters

If you receive a letter from a creditor that has information on the front AND the back, please make sure you make copies of **BOTH** sides of the letter and send it to us.

Thank you!

DCSD Telephone Directory - Toll Free (800) 992-3275

Applications/ABC Bank Info: ext. 1402 / Elizabeth

Additions to Existing Account: ext. 1501 / Gaby

Billing: ext. 1501 / Gaby

Creditors: ext. 1403 / Mindy

Legal Matters: ext. 1400 / Veronica or Leslie

Refer Family or Friends: ext. 1700 / Sylvia or Bonnie

Please be ready to provide your account number.

Update Your Contact Info!

Have you moved recently, changed your telephone number or got a new e-mail address? Please help us by providing any information that we may not have on file using the form below. **(If you are unsure if we have your current information, please call us before you send this form in.)** Thank you!

Name: _____ Client ID: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____