



Managing Cremated Remains in Alberta: A Guide for CMS Members

Cremation has become an increasingly popular choice for end-of-life arrangements in Alberta, offering flexibility, affordability, and a range of memorial options. Whether your family has chosen cremation for practical or personal reasons, it's important to understand how to manage and honour cremated remains responsibly.

General Guidelines for Scattering Ashes in Alberta

The rules for scattering ashes in Alberta are relatively flexible, allowing for respectful and meaningful tributes to loved ones. Here's what you need to know:

- **Permission:** Always obtain permission from landowners or governing authorities when scattering ashes on private property or in public spaces.
 - **Public Spaces:** Scattering ashes in public areas, such as parks or natural reserves, may require special permission from local authorities or the managing organization.
 - **Waterways:** Be sure that scattering ashes in lakes, rivers, or other water bodies does not violate local regulations, trespass on private property, or harm the environment.
 - **Respect and Sensitivity:** Choose a location that is not heavily trafficked to avoid causing distress to others. Be mindful of the environmental impact and the feelings of others who may visit the area.
 - **Packaging:** Always remove ashes from non-biodegradable containers before scattering to minimize environmental impact.
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Specific Locations for Scattering

- **National and Provincial Parks:** Scattering ashes on unoccupied provincial government-owned Crown land or water, including provincial parks, is permitted without official approval. However, be mindful of public health concerns by avoiding scattering near water treatment intakes, facilities, or areas where recreational water activities occur.

- Cemeteries: Some cemeteries have designated scattering gardens. Always check with cemetery management for specific rules and regulations.
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Transporting Cremated Remains

Whether you are moving cremated remains across town or internationally, there are important legal and logistical considerations:

Documentation and Permissions

- Death Certificate: Obtain a certified copy.
- Cremation Certificate: Issued by the crematory that performed the cremation.
- Permit for Disposition: May be required by some jurisdictions.
- Letter of Consent: Necessary for international transport, particularly when crossing borders.

Domestic Transport

- By Air: Check airline policies in advance. Use a sturdy, leak-proof container that can pass through X-ray machines. Airlines often prefer carry-on over checked baggage to reduce the risk of loss or damage.
- By Mail: Only ship through authorized services such as Canada Post using Priority or Xpresspost. Properly package the remains in a sealed inner container and a durable, sift-proof outer container.

International Transport

- Consulate/Embassy Regulations: Verify the specific requirements of the destination country.
 - Translation of Documents: Some countries require translated copies of the death and cremation certificates.
 - Customs Declarations: Be prepared to declare the cremated remains at customs checkpoints.
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Common Questions about Cremation in Alberta

What is the average cost of cremation in Alberta?

A simple, basic cremation may cost around \$1,650 or more in rural areas, while a cremation with a service and additional arrangements may cost up to \$7,500 or more. Costs vary by city and provider.

Can cremation be done immediately?

Generally, cremation takes place within 2–5 days after completing the necessary legal paperwork. The funeral home will manage these requirements.

What options are available for cremated remains?

Options include burial in a cemetery, placement in a columbarium, keeping the urn at home, or scattering in a natural area. Regulations vary by province.

Do I have to collect the cremated remains?

Yes. Funeral homes are not a permanent resting place for cremated remains. Consider a cemetery, columbarium, or scattering garden for long-term placement.

Are urns required?

Legally, no. However, urns are recommended if the remains will be displayed or interred. If an urn is not purchased, the remains are usually returned in a temporary container.

Does cremation contribute to environmental pollution?

Cremation facilities must comply with environmental regulations, minimizing the impact on air quality and emissions.

Respect and Remembrance

Managing cremated remains responsibly is an important part of honouring your loved one's memory. Whether you choose to scatter ashes in a cherished location, place them in a columbarium, or keep them close to home, it's essential to follow local regulations and be mindful of environmental considerations.

If you have questions or need assistance with arranging cremation services, CMS's contracted funeral service providers are here to help. They can guide you through every step, ensuring your family's wishes are respected and carried out with care.