General Information
The following information is provided for the sole purpose of assisting you with funeral planning and is intended for use only as a planning guide. It does not, in any way, preclude or diminish the services that a licensed funeral professional may offer you and your family. Your personally selected funeral director will carefully guide you through the entire funeral process and may offer other options than those listed below that better suit your own personal and individual needs.

Prior to Going to the Funeral Home
It may be helpful to have another family member or close friend go with you to the funeral home. You may wish to take the following:
- Name of your loved one (full name – include nickname or other names used)
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Social Security number
- Occupation
- Father’s name
- Mother’s maiden name
- If a veteran, proof of military service
- List of relatives and relationships
- List of religious organizations, professional organizations, clubs and other organizations in which membership was held
- The name and address of an organization of charity you want donations made to in memory of your loved one
- List of individuals who may be available as pallbearers and/or individuals who may speak about your loved one at the service
- You may wish to bring the clothing in which your loved one will be buried or cremated
- A note about the arrangements for a reception after the burial service

Embalming
In the United States, mortuary law is state regulated. Embalming is a normal policy of the local funeral home. It serves as a means of protecting the health of both the funeral home personnel handling the deceased, and mourners attending funerals where there will be an open-casket public viewing of the deceased. The family may choose an immediate disposition, such as a direct burial or direct cremation, where embalming would not be necessary. Your funeral director will be able to further explain these options.

Most commercial air carriers require embalming for the transportation of human remains. You may wish to first consult with the funeral director to guide you on how to approach these matters. Often, the funeral director will contract with a local mortuary service and arrange for embalming and transportation of the deceased. This process will save the family unnecessary duplication of service charges. Your funeral director will be able to advise you in these matters.

Casket Selection
Your funeral director will assist you in casket selection and will explain the various casket styles and features. Casket selection is strictly a matter of personal choice but will normally depend on price and the following factors:
- Means of final disposition (burial, cremation)
- If there will be a public viewing
- Type of materials used in casket construction
- Protective and non-protective casket features

Please note that caskets are also made available to the public through independent distributors, such as casket stores.
• Immediately following the funeral service, anyone
• The funeral service normally takes place in the
cemetery property. These containers also have
protective and non-protective features, and are priced
based on the materials used in construction.

Types of Funerals
Traditional Funeral
A traditional funeral normally involves arranged
services for three events: a visitation, funeral
and burial.
• The visitation service normally takes place in the
chapel or state room of the funeral home. However,
the location may vary depending on the family’s
individual needs. An evening of visitation will allow
family and friends the opportunity to be present with
the deceased in an open or closed casket setting.
The family may wish to arrange for an evening vigil
prayer service. Your funeral director will assist you in
planning a suitable place and time for all services,
depending on your family’s individual needs.
• The funeral service normally takes place in the
funeral home chapel, the family’s place of worship or
a suitable auditorium. For services taking place other
than at the funeral home, you may choose to have
family and friends meet at the time and place of the
service. This time will allow the immediate family
some privacy at the funeral home for the final viewing
of the deceased, prior to departing in procession for
the place where services are being held.
• Immediately following the funeral service, anyone
going to the cemetery joins in procession to
accompany the family to the place of burial for the
final committal service. After the committal service
and after everyone has departed from the cemetery,
the funeral director oversees the final burial.

Graveside Services
A dignified alternative to traditional services is the
graveside or tomb-side service. These types of
services can greatly reduce overall costs. The
underlying idea behind this type of service is that
everyone attending the funeral meets at the place of
burial or entombment at a specified time, where the
service takes place.

Normally there is no public viewing at the funeral home
for graveside services, but sometimes the immediate
family may be allowed private viewing for a short time
before burial. Since there is no procession to the
cemetery, motorcycle escorts are not an added
expense. Floral arrangements should be delivered
directly to the cemetery prior to funeral time or brought
personally by family and friends attending the funeral.
Your funeral director will be able to better assist you in
coordinating this type of service.

Cremation
Cremation is an alternative means of placing a loved
one to rest. Cremation will comparatively reduce
overall costs, saving the family additional expenses
normally incurred with traditional burial, such as
cemetery property, cemetery marker/headstone, outer
burial container, charges for opening and closing the
grave and motorcycle escorts. If you select cremation
as your final disposition, you may still wish to have
complete funeral services at the funeral home with
private and/or public viewing. Many funeral homes
offer cremation caskets designed specifically for these
types of services. All services normally conclude at the
funeral home and the cremation takes place privately.

Motorcycle Escorts
Motorcycle escorts are typically required by local
city ordinances to safely guide the procession
through public streets on the way to the church
and/or ceremony. Your funeral director will arrange
for motorcycle escorts and can give you more
information on their applicable fees.

Death Certificates
As a service to the family, the funeral director will
complete the death certificate application, secure the
doctor’s signature and cause of death and obtain
certified copies for the family. Your funeral director will
give you an estimated time in which to expect the
finalized copies. Having immediate access to a copy of
the deceased’s birth certificate, driver’s license, social
security card, military I.D. (if applicable), time of death
and the name and telephone number of the doctor
who will sign the death certificate will help speed up
this process.

Obituary
Your funeral director will assist you with the
appropriate format and biography of the deceased.
Invariably, the more frequent errors appearing on
obituaries involve the misspelling of names and the
omission of formal titles such as Reverend, Deacon or
Doctor. Before it is published, the obituary should be
checked for correct dates, days, times and locations.
Obituary notices can become very costly, especially
if you should consider including a picture of the
deceased or rerunning the obituary due to an error.

Financial Assistance for Burials
Wisconsin Funeral and Cemetery Aids Programs
(WFCAP)
Available for those individuals who cannot afford a
funeral for their family member.
Your county’s human services department can assist
you with the application for assistance. Most funeral
home directors also have access to the WFCAP web
site and can assist families in need.
http://dhfs.wisonconsin.gov/em/wfcap/index.htm

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family
Services Resources within your county of origin
• http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/programs.htm
• http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/aboutdhfs-
desareasadminstr-cntyagencylisting.pdf.url
This web site is a listing by county of all the human
services agencies in Wisconsin.

Burials
Funding is available when a W-2 participant
(individuals placed in W-2 work training placements,
custodial parents of infants and W-2 group members)
dies and the estate of the deceased recipient is
insufficient to pay the funeral, burial and cemetery
expenses of the deceased recipient. The lesser of
$1,500 or the cemetery expenses that are not paid by
the estate of the deceased and other persons and the
lesser of $1,500 or the funeral and burial expenses not
paid by the estate of the deceased and other persons
may be paid. No payment is made for funeral and
burial expenses if the costs for funeral and burial
expenses exceed $3,500. No payment is made for
cemetery expenses if the costs for cemetery expenses
exceed $3,500. Costs for these burials will be paid
with segregated state funding, which Wisconsin will
include in its Maintenance of Effort (MOE) calculation.