

## Questions People Ask about Cremation and Southampton Crematorium

1. How many of the deaths which occur in Great Britain each year result in cremation?

Cremation has become the preferred method of disposal in Great Britain. Approximately 70% of all recorded deaths are now followed by cremation.

2. Are there any religious groups which forbid cremation to their members?

All Christian denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, allow cremation. Cremation is also acceptable to Sikhs, Hindus, Parsees and Buddhists but it is forbidden by Orthodox Jews and Muslims.

3. Is cremation more expensive than burial?

Generally the cost of burial is much higher than the fee charged for cremation. Cremation usually necessitates the production of medical certificates for which fees are payable to doctors concerned. These certificates are not required when the death has been referred to and investigated by a Coroner (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland) or when burial is required, although in this case, in addition to the charges for interment, a number of other fees for grave purchase, memorials and grave maintenance may be incurred.

4. What service arrangements are available at the crematorium?

A full religious service may be conducted at the crematorium within the time allowed for each funeral. Alternatively, a service may take place in any separate place of worship followed by a brief committal ceremony at the crematorium. Families can arrange for their particular Minister to conduct the service or when required Funeral Directors may secure the services of a suitable Minister on behalf of the family.

5. Is it necessary for the cremation to be associated with a religious ceremony?

The deceased's family can make any service arrangements which they consider to be appropriate. Secular services can be conducted at the crematorium or, if required, no ceremony need take place. Memorial services can be conducted separately from the cremation ceremony in local places of worship by arrangement with the Minister concerned.

6. How is a cremation arranged?

A number of arrangements need to be made following a death. The responsibility normally falls on the Executor or the nearest surviving relative who may wish to approach a professional Funeral Director who will undertake some of the various tasks on their behalf. The Funeral Director will need to discuss with the family their requirements concerning the service arrangements and will assist in completing the necessary statutory and non-statutory forms. The Funeral Director will make the practical arrangements for the collection of the body and will obtain the necessary medical certificates. It will be necessary to register the death and information will be provided by the Funeral Director to assist in completing that duty.

7. Do relatives need to decide at this stage about the disposal of cremated remains?

The Funeral Director will discuss with relatives the alternative arrangements which may be adopted for the disposal of cremated remains. It is likely that a form of authority will be required to be signed advising the crematorium of the wishes of the family. If they are undecided it will be possible for the cremated remains to be retained, at the Funeral Director's premises, pending a decision.

8. What are the normal options for disposal of cremated remains?

Southampton crematorium provides a Garden of Remembrance where cremated remains can be dispersed. Cremated remains can be removed from the crematorium in a suitable container for disposal elsewhere. This may include interment in a grave in a cemetery or churchyard, dispersal at another crematorium or dispersed privately in a particular area selected by the family. Suitable permission should be obtained from the appropriate Authority in these cases.

9. What is a Garden of Remembrance and what facilities are provided there?

The Gardens of Remembrance at Southampton Crematorium consist of 15 numbered areas adjacent to the crematorium building, set aside for the disposal of cremated remains. The Garden of Remembrance is used continually for this purpose and it is not possible or appropriate to mark or identify the exact location of individual cremated remains.

10. What memorial facilities are available at Southampton Crematorium?

The Book of Remembrance is displayed in Book of Remembrance Chapel and entries are available for viewing on the anniversary of the date of death or on request. Southampton provide wall mounted plaques in stone which can be purchased for a limited period only. Donations are accepted for the provision of the grounds. The Funeral Director should be aware of the memorial options available but full details and scale of charges are available from Bereavement Services (02380228609) or the Crematorium (02380766405).

11. What is the procedure followed at the crematorium on the day of the funeral?

The mourners will normally gather at the crematorium in the waiting room or close to the entrance of the chapel a few minutes before the appointed time of the funeral service. It is not usual for the ceremony to commence before the publicised time. When the principal mourners are ready to proceed, the coffin will be conveyed into the chapel by the Funeral Director unless family bearers are used by request. The coffin will be placed on the catafalque and mourners will be directed to their seats after which the service will proceed. At the moment during the service when the committal of the body takes place the coffin is obscured from view by curtains (Families may request for the curtain to be left open). At the end of the service the mourners leave the chapel and may then inspect the floral tributes.

12. What happens to the coffin after the committal?

The coffin is withdrawn into the committal room where the nameplate is carefully checked by crematorium staff to ensure the correct identity. An identity card will then accompany the coffin and the resultant remains until their final disposal or removal from the crematorium.

13. Can relatives witness the committal of the coffin to the cremator?

The reception of the coffin in the committal room and its introduction into a cremator can be witnessed by arrangement with the Crematorium Manager. It is preferable to advise the Funeral Director of these requirements as early as possible when making the funeral arrangements.

14. Is the cremation of a body governed by a code of ethics and working practices?

Southampton City Council (The Cremation Authority) is a member of the Federation of British Cremation Authorities and is required to operate strictly in accordance with a Code of Cremation Practice. This Code, which provides the only ethical standard of cremation practice in Great Britain, is displayed in the public areas of the building.

15. How soon after the service will the cremation take place?

The cremation will usually be commenced shortly after the service. The Code of Cremation Practice specifies that the cremation is always completed on the same day as the service.

16. Is the coffin cremated with the body?

The Code requires that the coffin be placed in the cremator in exactly the same condition as that in which it was received at the crematorium. Crematorium regulations require that the coffin and all its fittings and furnishings be made from materials suitable for cremation. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 has placed a new responsibility on Cremation Authorities to ensure that the process is completed under controlled conditions which will minimise the impact on the environment. In these circumstances it will be necessary for any items included in the coffin for presentation or viewing purposes to be removed by the Funeral Director before the coffin is conveyed to the crematorium. It will not be possible for any floral tributes to be included with the coffin for cremation.

17. Should items of jewellery be left on a body for cremation?

It is preferable that all items of jewellery be removed from the body before the coffin is conveyed to the crematorium. The Funeral Director should ascertain your wishes in respect of this matter when the funeral arrangements are being discussed. It will not be possible to recover any items of jewellery after the coffin has been received at the crematorium.

18. Can more than one body be cremated in a cremator at the same time?

The Code insists that each cremation is carried out separately. Exceptions may be made for instance in the case of mother and baby or twin children providing that the next of kin has made a specific request in this regard.

19. What happens to the cremated remains after the cremation?

At the conclusion of a cremation the cremated remains are removed in their entirety and conveyed to a treatment area in a special container. Ferrous metals used in the construction of the coffin or metal used in medical implants are extracted and retained for separate disposal. Non-ferrous metals which may include an unrecognisable element of precious material will not be salvaged for any purpose and will be disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Cremation Practice and invariably this will be by burial in the crematorium grounds.

20. What procedures are followed to ensure that cremated remains are kept separate?

A cremator can physically accept only one coffin at a time and all remains are removed before the unit can be used again. The identity card referred to previously accompanies the coffin and cremated remains throughout the process until final disposal. The code of ethics and practical necessity are complementary and combine to ensure that the separation of cremated remains is achieved.

21. How are cremated remains treated at the crematorium?

Cremated remains are removed from the cremator only when no further reduction is possible. The remains are withdrawn into a cooling area and finally into a special container for transfer to a purpose made unit which, after removal of ferrous metals, will reduce the residue to a fine consistency suitable for storage and eventual disposal. The remains are enclosed in a suitable and carefully identified container to await dispersal or collection.

22. What quantity of remains will there be following a cremation?

The cremation of an adult will normally result in the presentation of cremated remains weighing between 2 and 4 kg. In the case of a body of an infant it may not be possible to guarantee that any remains will be collectable. This is due to the cartilaginous nature of the bone structure.

23. What happens to the cremated remains strewn in the ground?

The cremated remains, which have assumed a granular form, are normally distributed over a wide area of ground. Chemical reactions resulting from exposure to the elements quickly break down the remains so that within a few days little trace of them can be observed. At Southampton Crematorium cremated remains are strewn on grassed areas and buried in woodland areas.

24. Can cremated remains be interred and their position marked with a memorial?

The Gardens of Remembrance attached to Southampton Crematorium do not provide for the erection of permanent memorials. Cremated remains interred in Gardens of Remembrance are not contained in a casket or container of any kind. If it is required to inter cremated remains in a grave with traditional facilities for memorialisation, suitable enquiries should be made to the Registrar responsible for the selected cemetery.

25. Can cremated remains be retained by the family pending final disposal?

The Applicant for cremation may collect and retain the cremated remains if required. Cremated remains are not retained at Southampton Crematorium.

26. What arrangements can be made to ensure that cremation is the selected method of disposal following death?

Clear instructions in writing should be given to the person who will be responsible for making the funeral arrangements. Such instructions are not binding in law and it will therefore be necessary to ensure that the person instructed is someone who is likely to carry out the wishes of the deceased. The final decision will rest on the executors.

27. Can more information be obtained concerning cremation and if required can a crematorium be visited by members of the public?

The matters referred to previously may be discussed in more detail with Southampton City Councils Bereavement Services Unit or the Crematorium Manager. The Manager will be pleased to answer further questions and make arrangements for any member of the public to be accompanied on a visit to the crematorium.

28. What are the opening times for the Book of Remembrance Chapel?

The books of remembrance can be viewed between 8.30 Am and 6.00 Pm Monday to Friday and 10.00 Am and 4.00 Pm Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.

29. Can an entry in the Books of Remembrance be viewed at any time of the year?

The books of remembrance are split into four volumes, January to March, April to June, July to September and October to November. A quarterly volume is not available for the three months prior to its display. E.g. the January to March volume is not available from October to December.

Federation of British Cremation Authorities

Southampton City Council