



BAY AREA FUNERAL CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION

3921 E. Bayshore Rd., Ste. 203 | PO Box 50960

Palo Alto, Ca 94303

(650) 321-2109 phone | (650) 561-8518 fax

www.bafca.org

Email: office@bafca.org

WHAT TO DO WITH THE ASHES

With the support of FCA of California, state laws regarding the scattering of ashes have been changed so that you no longer need to arrange to have it done by a mortuary. You may do it yourself if you have permission of the landowner where the ashes will be scattered, and it is not banned by local ordinance. Some like their friends to scatter their ashes along a favorite hiking trail, campground, or viewing spot—maybe even on a golf course. But do clear it first with the superintendent or person in charge.

You can scatter ashes over the water 500 yards from the shore, but not from a bridge or pier. Scattering at sea or over mountains by airplane remains a popular option, ranging from free to \$250 if unaccompanied by family. You could spend thousands of dollars on a yacht sendoff in the Pacific Ocean, too, complete with food, drink, music, flowers, and toasts.

Always check to see if the person or firm you use has a state license for scattering. Bay Area Funeral Consumers Association lists some of the air and sea scatterers on the second page of the Price List of Cooperating Mortuaries. Most give discounts to FCA members.

The Coast Guard will scatter ashes at sea for veterans and their families without cost. (See details in the Consumer Guide to Funeral & Cemetery Purchases by the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau at www.dca.ca.gov.) All funeral homes will provide you with a free copy.

Some families make or buy an urn to store ashes at home, and some just put the plastic container that came from the crematory on a closet shelf.

Others buy space at a cemetery or columbarium to store the urn, either in outside or inside wall niches, in a burial plot, or in a dedicated scattering garden. A regular-sized burial plot can be the site of up to four cremains containers, depending on cemetery regulations. Cemeteries also might have individual urn-sized burial areas. Urban cemeteries may require you to put the box or urn inside a concrete or metal liner, so the ground doesn't sink and hinder grass cutting.

Some families divide up the ashes, so each family member gets a portion in a locket or small urn. Adding the ashes to an environmentally friendly ocean reef, sending the ashes up to outer space in a rocket, forming them into diamonds, and incorporating them into jewelry are more esoteric and expensive options.

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