Price Survey of Area Funeral Homes, 2017

This survey is compiled as a public service to give consumers a general comparison of funeral prices. Funeral businesses are required by the rules of the Federal Trade Commission to give prices over the phone and to give a printed copy of a General Price List (GPL) to anyone appearing in person and requesting information about funeral goods and services. The prices shown below are from the General Price Lists provided by the funeral homes. Prices are "subject to change without notice." FCA of the Piedmont (FCA-P) has made a good faith attempt to report the price information as accurately as possible. Please contact the funeral home directly to confirm current pricing.

The prices quoted below vary enormously. They make abundantly clear why consumers should think carefully about the services they want and compare prices before agreeing to what might well be one of the most expensive purchases they will make over a lifetime.

Between June 1 and September 30, 2017, volunteers obtained price lists from all funeral establishments physically located in Alamance, Forsyth, and Guilford Counties. Most are not found on the funeral home websites so this necessitated a phone call and more often an in-person visit to collect the price lists. One can learn a lot about our death trade during these visits!!

Most people haven't heard of the most important set of consumer protections available to grieving families — the Funeral Rule. Made effective in 1984, this Federal Trade Commission rule is like a consumer's bill of rights when shopping for a funeral. The Funeral Rule gives consumers:

- **The right to pick and choose only the items they want** — funeral homes can't force you to buy a package of goods and services.
- **The right to printed, itemized price lists** — like a restaurant menu, funeral homes have to give you a printed price list at the beginning of any arrangements discussion.
- **The right to factual information** — funeral directors can't lie to you and claim things like embalming or certain caskets are required by law when that's not true.
- **The right to see a price list for caskets** before going into the showroom.
- **The right to get price quotes over the phone**.
- **The right to build or buy their own casket** outside the funeral home without paying a "casket-handling fee" to the funeral director.

If you're not aware of these rights, you can't protect yourself from misleading, high-pressure sales pitches. Funerals are an emotionally laden transaction, but they're also a **business transaction.** Funeral homes know this well, and grieving people are not usually in the mood to haggle or question. As consumers, we need to take responsibility for educating ourselves about what we do and don't want in a funeral, and what we can and can't afford. If we leave it up to the funeral home to make sure "we have a nice service," chances are we're going to pay $7,000 or more for a cookie-cutter, one-of-everything funeral. It might be more than we can afford, and those shiny caskets and long calling hours may not be the most meaningful, personal way to remember the person who died.

Whatever you choose — burial, a full funeral, cremation, a simple memorial service — you can get the most from your funeral dollar by shopping around ahead of time. Learning how to compare prices and services among funeral homes will put you in control when a death occurs. Consumer surveys show most people simply use the same funeral home they've used before, *just because they've used it before.* But if you don't shop around, you might be paying thousands more than you need to for comparable service elsewhere in town.

To help get you started, we've collected forty-seven (47) funeral home price lists from the Piedmont Triad region, which includes Alamance, Forsyth, and Guilford Counties. The accompanying spreadsheets will let you quickly scan prices at each for the simplest to the most involved final send-off. We've checked these price lists for compliance with the FTC Funeral Rule, and for general readability. Consumers should be cautious about funeral homes with price lists that don't comply with the FTC Funeral Rule, or that use misleading or confusing language that's likely to pad the final bill.

Only 28 of the 47---or 60%---of the price lists we collected were 100 percent compliant with the Funeral Rule. Some had only very minor problems that aren't likely to cause consumers great difficulty and would be easy to correct. Others had more significant violations, such as failing to offer required low-cost options and disclosures about the availability of these options.

A note on the "basic services fee" — All funeral homes charge what's called the "basic services fee," the only charge that you cannot decline to pay. Unfortunately, the Federal Trade Commission defined this so loosely that many funeral homes abuse the fee by

inflating it excessively. The fee is meant to cover all the administrative things common to all funerals, simple or elaborate, such as planning the service, filing necessary permits, etc. But funeral homes often lump most or all of their operating overhead into this fee, then low-ball the prices on the *actual goods and services you choose.* Families trying to control costs by declining optional services — like a public viewing or formal funeral service — still pay the same basic services fee. Thus, you shell out a lot on the "get in the door fee" and pay for more overhead than your fair share if you select simpler arrangements.

Abbreviations and Terms Used:

DC - Direct Cremation (simple cremation with no ceremony)

IB - Immediate Burial (simple burial without ceremony)

FR - Forwarding Remains (embalming the body, completing the paperwork, and getting it to the airport for a distant burial)

RR - Receiving Remains (picking up the body from the airport and getting it to the cemetery)

Basic Services Fee - The one fee the FTC permits funeral homes to charge all customers, and that customers may not decline. The fee ostensibly covers the planning of the funeral, but the FTC permits funeral homes to put as much overhead in this fee as they like. This has led to the absurd inflation of this fee (several thousand dollars is not uncommon), meaning consumers are paying a steep charge even for simpler funerals requiring less staff and overhead.

Right of Selection (ROS) - This FTC-required disclosure must appear on all price lists, right at the beginning. It alerts consumers that they have the right to choose only the goods and services they want, except that the funeral home will add a charge for its "professional services." This charge is the basic services fee, described above.

Please contact Sara Williams with any questions (fcapiedmont@gmail.com or 919-623-0051).

Funeral Home	Sechrest Funeral Svc	Twin City Cremations	Community Funeral Svc	Gilmore Memorial Funeral Svcs	Triad Cremation Society
Basic Service Fee	2995	1650	1100	1795	1700
Embalming	1195	550	550	695	650
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	395	150	175	175	165
Viewing	495	300	250	350	250
Funeral Ceremony	695	600	400	350	525
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	595	270	150	275	325
Hearse	495	0	425	400	275
Limo	220	0	375	350	275
Graveside Service	695	500	350	375	500
Total Full Service Funeral	**7780**	**4020**	**3775**	**4765**	**4665**
(without casket)					
Cheapest Casket	795	1065	2195	975	400
Cheapest Vault	1295	1050	370	1520	895
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**3970**	**1275**	**1000**	**2470**	**1270**
Direct Cremation (w/alt.cont.)	**2395**	**895**	**790**	**1400**	**845**
$300+ crematory fee added?	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Memorial Service	695	300	350	350	400
Forwarding Remains	2720	2065	700	1740	2065
Receiving Remains	2570	1865	1895	2195	1565
Sanitary Care	395	150	150	125	175
FTC Compliance	**no**	yes	**no**	yes	yes
Clarity	good	good	good		good
Notes	July 2016/ Dignity Owned Note 8	July 2016/no hearse or limo available	7/1/2017 Note 8	Jan-16	Jun-17

Funeral Home	Perry J Brown	Phillips	Pierce-Jefferson	Regional Memorial Cremations	Serenity	Woodard	Wright
Basic Service Fee	1995	1500	2295	0	2150	1950	2300
Embalming	1000	995	895	0	750	795	400
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	190	125	495	0	100	100	150
Viewing	375	300	790	0	375	375	300
Funeral Ceremony	375	400	950	0	450	450	425
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	200	175	350	250	195	195	200
Hearse	350	300	350	0	445	295	150
Limo	300	250	350	0	300	295	495
Graveside Service	375	300	1595	0	400	400	425
Total Full Service Funeral	**5160**	**4345**	**8070**	**250**	**5165**	**4855**	**4845**
(without casket)							
Cheapest Casket	1399	1000	2895	45	1295	2295	995
Cheapest Vault	1299	995	995	0	1000	1195	1295
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**1414**	**1500**	**3295**	**0**	**795**	**0**	**2650**
	999	**1695**	**2020**	**745**	**795**	**1250**	**930**
$300+ crematory fee added?	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Memorial Service	375	400	850	0	450	450	425
Forwarding Remains	2645	1250	1595	50	1600	1495	1825
Receiving Remains	1870	1250	1495	0	1800	2490	1425
Sanitary Care	100	0	0	0	0	75	200
FTC Compliance	yes	**no**	**no**	yes	yes	**no**	yes
Clarity	good	good	good	good	good	fair	good
Notes	Jan-17	6/1/2017 Note 8	4/1/2016 Note 4	March 2013 Not a licensed funeral establishment-crematory service	Jul-17	August 2017 Immediate Burial not offered-potential violation of the Funeral Rule	Jul-17

Funeral Home	Hargett	Hinnant	Johnson & Sons	Lambeth-Troxler	Memorial Funeral Svc	National Cremation Svc	People's
Basic Service Fee	1800	1725	1120	2050	1095	505	1415
Embalming	795	675	625	850	350	0	595
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	165	175	225	295	100	300	350
Viewing	250	350	300	475	250	0	300
Funeral Ceremony	600	345	475	475	500	0	300
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	250	200	170	295	125	595	225
Hearse	325	275	250	275	100	0	300
Limo	285	285	250	95	0	0	225
Graveside Service	500	1775	420	475	400	0	300
Total Full Service Funeral	**4970**	**5805**	**3835**	**5285**	**2920**	**1400**	**4010**
(without casket)							
Cheapest Casket	950	1375	2250	1175	1195	795	950
Cheapest Vault	900	1590	1195	1495	1095	495	950
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**2415**	**1375**	**1215**	**2350**	**1500**	**0**	**2015**
Direct Cremation (w/alt.cont.)	**2375**	**2000**	**1395**	**1995**	**995**	**1300**	**1295**
$300+ crematory fee added?	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Memorial Service	400	345	475	475	300	0	300
Forwarding Remains	3170	975	1495	1550	1500	125	2310
Receiving Remains	2490	1375	1895	1550	1195	0	1715
Sanitary Care	200	0	0	295	0	0	175
FTC Compliance	**no**	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	**no**
Clarity	good	good	good	good	good	good	good
Notes	10/1/2016 Note 8	Jan-14	Apr-16	Jan-17	Sep-17	Apr-17	3/1/2012 Notes 3,8

Funeral Home	Allen & Associates	Cumby	Davis Funeral Home	Forbis & Dick	Gate City Cremations	George Brothers	Hanes Lineberry
Basic Service Fee	1900	2945	2995	1990	945	1895	3495
Embalming	825	650	1195	950	0	920	1095
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	200	225	395	295	0	380	395
Viewing	375	350	495	995	100	525	695
Funeral Ceremony	525	475	695	995	0	550	795
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	195	375	595	225	200	195	595
Hearse	350	275	495	275	0	195	395
Limo	300	250	220	275	0	195	320
Graveside Service	550	475	695	795	0	515	795
Total Full Service Funeral	**5220**	**6020**	**7780**	**6795**	**1245**	**5370**	**8580**
(without casket)							
Cheapest Casket	2150	1695	795	5245	0	995	795
Cheapest Vault	1250	1395		1500	0	1395	895
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**1250**	**2770**	**3970**	**3470**	**0**	**2195**	**3495**
Direct Cremation (w/alt.cont.)	**850**	**2345**	**2395**	**2825**	**945**	**1895**	**3095**
$300+ crematory fee added?	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Memorial Service	425	475	695	995	0	455	495
Forwarding Remains	1450	2595	2720	1895	85	1575	3245
Receiving Remains	1950	2655	2570	2470	0	1495	2645
Sanitary Care	225	150	395	225	0	305	330
FTC Compliance	**no**	yes	**no**	yes	yes	yes	**no**
Clarity	good	good	good	fair	good	good	good
Notes	11/1/2016 Note 8	Jan-17	July 2016/ Dignity Owned Note 8	Feb-17	Sep-17	Jan-17	July 2016/ Dignity Owned Note 8

Funeral Home	Hayworth-Miller	Hooper	J.C. Green & Sons	Johnson's Home of Memory	Loving Care Crems	Roberts	Salem
Basic Service Fee	2450	1495	1750	1595	995	1650	2395
Embalming	595	790	995	625	495	900	695
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	185	300	325	200	195	100	175
Viewing	325	325	460	200	400	125	125
Funeral Ceremony	500	400	460	350	445	350	750
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	270	400	295	200	175	175	395
Hearse	270	450	350	300	325	325	295
Limo	250	450	200	290	360	250	200
Graveside Service	600	300	400	300	445	350	650
Total Full Service Funeral	**5445**	**4910**	**5235**	**4060**	**3835**	**4225**	**5680**
(without casket)							
Cheapest Casket	1095	400	850	0	695	990	995
Cheapest Vault	1225	1895	1100	0	950	1205	475
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**2990**	**1325**	**2425**	**1685**	**795**	**2500**	**3260**
Direct Cremation (w/alt.cont.)	**2525**	**0**	**1825**	**1350**	**695**	**1000**	**2865**
$300+ crematory fee added?	yes	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Memorial Service	500	300	300	350	445	250	600
Forwarding Remains	2190	1895	1915	1795	995	1825	2995
Receiving Remains	1595	1995	1495	1475	995	2125	2965
Sanitary Care	185	150	150	200	95	150	175
FTC Compliance	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Clarity	good	good	good	good	good	good	good
Notes	Jul-17	May 2017 Does not offer cremation	Jan-17	March 2017 Cheapest Casket and Cheapest Vault prices not on GPL	Jan-17	Jul-16	Jul-16

	Sharpe	Walkers	Affordable Cremations	Clark S. Brown & Sons	Davidson	Douthit	Frank Vogler & Sons
Basic Service Fee	1500	1995	0	1650	2295	2195	2995
Embalming	500	650	0	575	795	750	1195
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	150	50	0	175	350	300	395
Viewing	350	375	0	275	495	300	495
Funeral Ceremony	350	375	0	295	595	450	695
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	160	350	0	195	300	350	595
Hearse	300	250	0	275	350	450	495
Limo	250	200	0	225	200	300	220
Graveside Service	400	375	0	225	495	300	695
Total Full Service Funeral	**3960**	**4620**	**0**	**3890**	**5875**	**5395**	**7780**
(without casket)							
Cheapest Casket	500	1795	95	675	995	525	795
Cheapest Vault	895	1295	295	1275	1795	1425	1295
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**1250**	**2445**	**0**	**1500**	**2195**	**1975**	**3395**
Direct Cremation (w/alt.cont.)	**1800**	**2165**	**900**	**1250**	**1895**	**1000**	**2395**
$300+ crematory fee added?	no	no	no	no	yes	no	yes
Memorial Service	350	375	0	250	595	450	695
Forwarding Remains	2010	1940	0	1525	1795	2000	2995
Receiving Remains	900	1590	0	1525	2495	2650	2595
Sanitary Care	135	70	0	125	350	0	395
FTC Compliance	**no**	**no**	yes	yes	yes	yes	**no**
Clarity	good	good	good	good	good	good	good
Notes	3/1/2010/ Notes 1,8	1/1/2017 Note 8	July2014-We are not a full-service funeral home-cremations only	May-16	Jan-16	Jul-17	4-16/ Dignity Owned Note 8

Funeral Home Name	Alamance Funeral Service	Blackwell	Lowe	McClure	Miles	Omega	Rich & Thompson
Basic Service Fee	1495	1695	2735	3145	1500	1590	3250
Embalming	595	850	550	670	700	400	725
Other Prep. (dressing, makeup)	195	190	300	225	275	150	150
Viewing	260	350	260	295	475	500	475
Funeral Ceremony	450	500	350	395	200	500	475
Body Removal (transfer of remains)	195	295	270	290	200	195	90
Hearse	200	385	180	375	250	150	250
Limo	250	375	200	50	225	400	250
Graveside Service	625	500	350	395	200	500	475
Total Full Service Funeral	**4265**	**5140**	**5195**	**5840**	**4025**	**4385**	**6140**
(without casket)							
Cheapest Casket	700	1250	895	1895	990	960	1295
Cheapest Vault	995	1480	990	1245	95	900	1000
Immediate Burial (no casket)	**1795**	**1000**	**2320**	**2240**	**1800**	**1595**	**2295**
Direct Cremation (w/alt.cont.)	**995**	**750**	**1995**	**1995**	**800**	**795**	**2095**
$300+ crematory fee added?	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no
Memorial Service	425	500	350	395	200	500	475
Forwarding Remains	2500	1250	1142	1755	1200	995	1695
Receiving Remains	1395	1000	1170	2080	1450	995	1595
Sanitary Care	195	180	300	75	200	50	170
FTC Compliance	**no**	**no**	yes	yes	**no**	**no**	**no**
Clarity	fair	good	good	good	good	good	good
Notes	Date on GPL Not Current November 2010/ Notes 1,2,8	4/1/2015/ Note 4	Feb-16	Nov-16	1/1/2012/ Note 8	10/1/2016/ Note 8	11/1/2016/ Note 4

1. Date on Price List not current
2. Cremation price does not include crematory fee
3. Crematory Fee not clear
4. Price List contains major violations of Funeral Rule
5. Casket fee violations for cremation and/or immediate burial
6. No immediate burial, a violation of the funeral rule
7. No vaults on Price List, a violation of the Funeral Rule
8. Immediate burial price listing in violation of the Funeral Rule