



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PRIOR TO DEATH (IF POSSIBLE)

- Order coffin/casket – if there is a particular one that you would like to use
- Make your own coffin/casket – time is needed to gather materials, to physically build and possibly have approved as suitable. It is a legal requirement for the coffin/casket to have two identification plates. One is a name plate (wooden or brass) with the person's FULL NAME engraved onto it, as well as a lead strip, with the person's INITIALS and FULL SURNAME stamped into it in 10mm letters. The nameplate is screwed (with 4 screw holes) onto a wooden coffin/casket or attached to a wicker coffin/casket and the lead strip is taped/attached to the underside of the name plate if to be buried or given to staff at the crematorium.
- If burial is what is wanted, burial plots can be reserved prior to death.
- Cremation and burial can be prepaid (for people wanting to plan ahead) at the cemetery of choice at a slightly higher cost to on demand.
- If you want to keep your person at home/place you will need to think about and arrange cooling – e.g., ice (can freeze water in plastic water bottles or 'hot water bottles'), hire cold plate (limited availability), air cooler/conditioning etc.
- If family/community are thinking that would like to take on the role and responsibilities of the funeral (by apply for a 'single funeral permit' – NOTE: 'Single Funeral Permit Packages' [information regarding required forms] are available from 'Metropolitan Cemetery Board' or the local Shire or local cemetery/crematorium in regional areas) it is worthwhile becoming familiar with what is required prior to the death occurring.
- If your person is likely to die in a care facility/hospital/hospice and you would like to bring them home once death occurs, inform staff that this is your plan – You can have a body taken home after death in a facility, you may be discouraged or possibly told the body needs to be embalmed, this is not true. You can transport your person yourself (or arrange transport with a funeral director) and do not need a special permit (can be more straightforward if the transport is done by the executor of the will and with 'medical certificate of cause of death' – but no legislation around this. Also, the care facility/hospital/hospice may ask you to sign a register before you take the body – this is what the funeral director would usually sign).

By Kit Bewley of [Nourishing Transitions](#) and
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AFTER DEATH OCCURS

- *"The doctor who was responsible for the medical care of a person before their death or who examines the person after death, must complete and sign a 'medical certificate of cause of death'. This certificate must be issued within 48 hours after the person's death and given to the funeral director or persons arranging the funeral service."* (From WA Dep. of Health)
- The person can stay home after death with ice and air conditioning (or cold plate) for up to 5 days (5 days is WA legal max. allowable amount of time) depending on cause of death, condition of body and medication/treatments they were receiving prior to death. Also, an important factor to consider is WA temperatures in summer, people generally seem comfortable to keep their person at home for 24 – 48 hours.
- It is possible to choose to keep your person at home after death and then arrange for the Funeral Director to do a non-attend cremation or transport person directly from home to cemetery for burial (most cost effective).
- The family/community can take on the role of the funeral director (including all logistics/ legalities) by applying for a 'Single Funeral Permit' – this process is somewhat complicated in WA as the system is set up for funeral directors...but also totally possible and achievable!
- Step 1: If the family/community want to do above (Single Funeral Permit), they must apply to the Metropolitan Cemetery Board (MCB) (In regional areas – the 'Shire' or regional cemetery takes on the roles & responsibilities of the MCB) for a Single Funeral Permit (*SFP – In metro areas Public Liability Insurance is needed for SFP, this doesn't seem to be the case in the Great Southern Region where I [Kit] am based, a SFP comes under the 'Shire' or local cemetery insurance). The MCB will query what kind of vehicle is being used and if it is suitable, they will also want to approve whatever coffin you want to provide (if homemade there are specifics, best to check in advance).



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FURTHER INFORMATION

Below are links to the MCB SFP (In regional areas – Shire and local cemetery/crematorium have their own version of these forms, which need to be requested directly – are not online) information and associated forms:

- [SFP General information](#)
- [SFP Cremation](#)
- [SFP Burial](#)

Government of Western Australia Department of Health – Information regarding ‘Medical Referees’ and Form 6 and Form 7 which are required as a part of the full ‘Single Funeral Permit’ application are located here.

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Medical-referees

It is important to note: For a **cremation** there is a ‘Form 6’ (‘Application for Permit to Cremate’) that the SFP applicant will need fill out and then give (an appointment will need to be made – the charge is simply a standard doctor’s appointment fee) to a ‘Medical Referee’ (a medical doctor appointed under the Cremation Act. – When making an appointment to see ‘Medical Referee’ staff at Medical Centre may tell you that they cannot deal with anyone other than a Funeral Director, this is completely untrue and there is no legislation to back this up) who will then complete a ‘Form 9’ – required as a part of the SFP application to be given to either the MCB, or regionally, the local cemetery/crematorium or ‘Shire’.

It all differs in the regional north where there is no crematorium so if you want a cremation, unless you place the body in your own vehicle (quietly) and transport it south it will have to be embalmed for transport.

The Aboriginal/Indigenous people often hold funerals weeks after death due to finances and suitable times for family/community gatherings. This may differ through each community depending on distances.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/N_R/Preparation-of-the-deceased-for-burial-or-cremation

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Cremation-regulations-in-Western-Australia

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_215_homepage.html

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_1279_homepage.html

<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/community/cemeteries-and-burials>



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