

Which funeral home is used?

Congregation Emanu-El uses

Sands Funeral Home
1803 Quadra Street
Victoria, B.C. V8T 4B8
(250) 388-5155
www.sands-funeral.com

The *Chevra Kadisha* comes to the funeral home and does all the necessary preparations there. As well, *shmira* (staying with the deceased) takes place at Sands.

Why would I want to arrange for a funeral and gravesite now?

There are advantages to pre-arranging funerals. First of all, when a loved one dies, we are often thrown into a state of chaos. At a time of mourning, it is always easier for the survivors if as much as possible of the funeral plans have been made in advance. However, this is not always possible. By indicating exactly what you wish, at a less stressful time, you can make rational, logical decisions. As well, you can insure that you and your family can be buried in the only Jewish cemetery in Victoria.

There is no right or wrong way to do this. For some people, it is distasteful to pre-arrange funerals, and their feelings must be respected. Other people feel pre-arranging is a responsible action to take. Each individual must do what feels right for her/himself.

Are there any extra costs?

No, but donations to the Rabbi's discretionary fund or to the Shul are welcome.

If someone in your family is very ill or approaching death, we urge you to call the synagogue at (250) 382-0615 and inform the rabbi, so that we can put support mechanisms in place for you during your time of need.

Life is Holy

Caring for you and
your family with loving
kindness and dignity in
life and death

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The guiding principle for
the components of Jewish
funerals is *Kavod L'Met*
(honour for the deceased).

Life is Holy

The body which held life retains that sanctity after death. Respect and care are shown to the deceased by *shmira* (accompanying the body from death to burial). The *shomer* (person who attends the body) offers comfort to the soul. *Tahara* (ritual cleansing) and *tachrichim* (ritual white burial shrouds) reflect that respect. The *Chevra Kadisha* (holy burial society) lovingly care for the body, the holy vessel that contained the image of God, through reverent care for the physical and through prayer.

Because of the solemnity of the occasion, flowers or music are discouraged at a Jewish funeral. For the same reasons, embalming, routine autopsies, or viewing the deceased are considered inconsistent with the holiness and sanctity of the body, because of the potential indignities to the body that may be involved.

The work of the *Chevra Kadisha* is traditionally called *chesed shel emet* (The loving kindness of truth). The members of the *Chevra Kadisha* lovingly wash and ritually clean the body in preparation for burial (*tahara*). Men do *tahara* for men; women for women. After the body is carefully washed and dried, the body is clothed in *tachrichim*.

We are all equal in death

The Jewish path to equality in death is through simplicity. Both men and women are clothed in *tachrichim*. *Aron* (a simple wooden casket with no metal) is used; this reflects the idea that death is a natural event and our path is from dust to dust. By using *tachrichim* and *aron*, all of us, rich or poor, can have the same dignity in death.

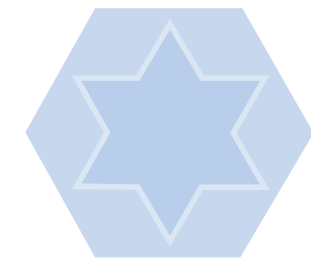
For those who wore a *tallit* (prayer shawl) in life, they are wrapped in it for burial.

Aninut is the pre-mourning stage where a loved one's remains have not yet been buried. Traditionally, this is a time when the closest relatives are to be fully supported. All of the details concerning burial are cared for by the *Chevra Kadisha*. Loved ones do not need to make decisions and manage details at this time of limbo and shock.

K'vurah bakarka (in ground burial) is required by Jewish law. It is considered a *mitzvah* and honour to accompany the deceased and to fill in the grave. A way that we show *kavod* (honour) for the deceased is involvement in the burial, helping the body return to the earth. This act moves the closest loved ones into their period of *Avelut* (mourning).

After burial, the living remain our concern

The community has an obligation to help the bereaved, by participating in the funeral and *shiva* (mourning period after the funeral) and by providing food. These are both considered *mitzvot*. At the time of the funeral, mourners go through the ceremony of *k'riah* (rending garments), and are encouraged to express their grief. *Shiva* lasts for seven days with some exceptions which depend upon Jewish holy days.



Laws and customs of Shiva

A seven-day *yartzeit* candle is lit, which honours the soul of the deceased. It is kept burning until the end of *shiva*. This *yartzeit* candle is supplied by the *Chevra Kadisha* and is brought to the house of mourning.

The *mourners' Kaddish* is a prayer that affirms God's presence in the universe during a difficult time. It is a prayer for the safekeeping of the soul of the dead and a powerful tool to memorialize them. The rabbi, with the help of the *Chevra Kadisha*, will organize a *minyan* at your home during *shiva*.

All mirrors are covered in the home. Mirrors are symbols of joy, and invite vanity. Mourners will be protected from those displays by covering the mirrors.

In a house of *shiva*, greetings are not exchanged and the door is left open so that visitors can let themselves in and out.

Shoes are removed at the door.

Meals are brought in by the community.

It is customary to sit on low chairs during *shiva*.

Mourners do not leave the home during *shiva*, although after the first three days, a mourner may leave to attend a funeral, because that is fulfilling a *mitzvah*. The mourner may leave the house at night.

On Shabbat, the mourner may attend the synagogue, but is not given an *aliyah*.

At the end of *shiva*, the mourners walk outside around the block, accompanied by their community. This symbolizes their re-emergence into society. Following this, they usually go to the cemetery to visit the deceased.

Shloshim is the thirty day period of mourning which follows death and in which the community supports the bereaved. During *shloshim*, mourners are forbidden to wear new clothes and should not have their hair cut or shave during the entire thirty days.

Yahrtzeit (anniversary of death) is observed every year according to the Jewish calendar. A twenty-four hour candle is lit in honour of the deceased.

Yizkor (memorial) is the name of both a specific prayer and the service during which the prayer is recited. There are four *Yizkor* services throughout the year, with the one of *Yom Kippur* being the most solemn; it is the time when the whole community remembers all those who have died, in the past year and beyond.

Tzedakah (charity) is given to honour the dead. It is a way of connecting the living and the dead and keeps the beliefs of the dead alive. *Tikkun olam* (helping to repair the world) is a way to translate grief into social justice and healing.

Frequently asked questions on arranging funerals

Where is the Jewish cemetery?

The cemetery is located at the corner of Cedar Hill Road and Fernwood. The entrance gates are off Cedar Hill Road. The size of the cemetery is one and a half acres. There are approximately three hundred gravesites at present and there is room for an additional four hundred or so more.

Who can be buried in the Jewish cemetery?

Any Jewish person can be buried in the cemetery. There are two financial categories: members of Congregation Emanu-El and non-members. A person is deemed a member in this regard after having paid synagogue dues for three consecutive years.

Can I have a Jewish ritual preparation and funeral?

Yes. It is important that your desires be made

known before your death. The *Chevra Kadisha* will honour your wishes as much as possible. Routinely, *taharah* (ritual washing of the body) is conducted by the *Chevra Kadisha* at the funeral home. The deceased are clothed in *tachrichim* (white linen shrouds) and buried in a pine box. A small amount of *afar* (Israeli earth) is put on the body and in the coffin.

Can I arrange for a gravesite for my family and myself now?

Yes. You can buy one or more gravesites at any time.

Can I arrange for my family and I to be buried together?

Yes. You can purchase two or more sites together and at the time of the first death, the other sites will be prepared for your future use.

Can I choose a particular site for my family and myself?

No. This is no longer possible because we would like to maximize the number of sites available and the only way to do that would be to use the sites in an orderly way. The layout has been planned by a professional and there is a certain order of development that must be followed.

Can I make special requests for my funeral?

Special requests, for example, specific prayers or other requests, will be kept on record and will be honoured if at all possible.

Can I make special requests, for example, planting trees or bushes, for my gravesite?

All special requests will be considered and must first be approved by the cemetery committee. The perpetual maintenance of the cemetery does not include extras such as special gardens or plants. If you desire something like that, and it is approved by the committee, then you will be responsible for its upkeep.

What is involved in purchasing a gravesite?

Call the offices of Congregation Emanu-El at (250) 382-0615 to inform them of your interest. A member of the cemetery committee will return your call and make all the necessary arrangements with you.

What is the cost of a gravesite and funeral? What does that include?

The cost of the funeral is \$7,000.00 for members and \$12,000.00 for non-members. This includes confirmation that the next available site at the time of death will be given to you. It includes the entire funeral service, *Chevra Kadisha* supplies, the funeral home, hearse and all other relevant needs, as well as maintenance of the gravesite and cemetery in perpetuity. It also includes the rabbi's services as well as all synagogue administrative services. It does not include the head stone, or any special care required at the gravesite. The unveiling which occurs up to a year after the funeral is also included.

It is possible to make arrangements to pay over time of several years if this is financially advisable.

How do I arrange for a headstone?

Headstones can be ordered from either:

Mortimer's Monumental Works
709 Kings Road, Victoria, B.C.
(250) 383-6421 or:

Stewart Monumental Works
1403 May Street, Victoria, B.C.
(250) 384-3452

Headstones are an additional \$600.00 to \$2500.00. They are generally put in place a year after the funeral. All headstones and grave coverings are to be approved by the Cemetery Committee. The Rabbi acts as a consultant with regard to headstone wording and proofreading.