



Viewing Information

At Flintofts, we try to provide our families with information that could affect their decisions. On July 24, 2005 a new state law became effective. RCW 18.39.215, Section 17 requires all funeral homes in the State of Washington to refrigerate the deceased immediately upon receipt **or** embalm with the permission from the next of kin. Embalming makes it possible to have the deceased available for viewing for several days. There are three primary reasons to embalm: Disinfection – to allow family and funeral home staff to safely be near the remains; Preservation – which allows time for families and friends to arrive for the funeral; and Restoration. Experts on grief agree that viewing helps survivors take the first step towards a healthy readjustment to their loss. It provides for an acceptable recall image of the deceased while confirming the reality of the death. Embalming can allow survivors time to make unhurried decisions regarding funeral arrangements and final disposition. It also permits relatives coming from distant places to view the deceased and to say “good-bye”. Embalming is generally required if the deceased is to be shipped by airlines.

Under WAC 246-500-030 State of Washington (2) (d) **Viewing for identification for a period of time not to exceed one hour by a person able to identify the deceased is allowed.** (2) (e) Washing, anointing, clothing, praying over, reading to, singing with, guarding, viewing, or otherwise accompanying the deceased for a period of time not to exceed 24 hours by persons acting according to the directions of the deceased or the person having the right to control the disposition of the remains under RCW 68.50.160, provided that anyone directly touching the remains uses barrier precautions according to requirements under RCW 246-500-020 (1) (b); or (f) As otherwise approved by the local health officer after evaluating specific circumstances, the need to protect public health, and recognition of religious beliefs. (3) A funeral director, embalmer, or other person assisting in the preparation of human remains for final disposition must prohibit activities otherwise allowed under subsection (2) (e) of this section if informed by a local health officer or medical examiner that such activities would pose a direct threat to human health.

There is a charge for viewing at the funeral home. Viewing after hours, Sundays, and legal holidays is additional. The options and costs for viewing are listed on our General Price List. There are circumstances where viewing without embalming is undesirable. These could include: natural processes that may have accelerated due to illness or external conditions between time of death and viewing, after traumatic injuries and autopsy or organ donation procedures.

Another consideration is whether the deceased was immediately refrigerated upon death. Without refrigeration the natural processes can precede quickly. If there is an autopsy, we strongly recommend embalming and autopsy repair before viewing. Some families have a viewing in the hospital room before an autopsy rather than at the funeral home. In many cases, embalming can make the difference between an acceptable and less than acceptable goodbye.

Some of these rules are difficult to interpret or understand. Our funeral directors are available to explain your options and discuss this information with you. Our goal is to provide your family with the best memory picture possible. If you have any questions, please call at any time.