

# Things to Consider

This booklet is designed to help you prepare while you care for someone who is terminally ill or after you have recently lost a family member, friend or someone who was close to you.

It offers suggestions, things to consider and contacts which may assist you and your family in the difficult days ahead.



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BBNA Workforce Development Center

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## **Losing a Love One**

It is very difficult to think about the next steps and plans that need to be completed when someone dies. Please take your time and ask yourself what is best for your family while making arrangements. If you are unable to make these difficult choices, ask for help from another family member or from someone in your community who may have helped others in their time of need. You do not need to take it all upon yourself to make the necessary arrangements. Many people are very understanding and are willing to help. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

## **Burial Assistance**

It will be important in this process to keep a record of who you have contacted, what services or funding is available and what is needed to help guide you in the days ahead. You may use the form on page 15 of this booklet to help in planning.

The deceased may have had a will. The will may list specific information about how the deceased requested to be laid to rest. Use this knowledge in helping to make the necessary arrangements. The will may be stored at the deceased person's house, courthouse, BBNA or a lawyer's office.

Burial and funeral costs can be very expensive. There are several agencies that offer burial assistance. Services typically include only direct services related to the needs of the deceased such as casket, cross, funeral home services, and freight/transportation of the deceased to be transported to the community to be buried. Each organization has an application process and eligibility requirements. **Do not assume expenses or services will be covered.** Limits are set for specific services and reimbursement for purchase costs made may not be allowed. Travel for family members is typically not allowed.

## **Important Documents**

You will need to gather some important documents together to apply for services such as;

- Social Security Number
- Tribal Enrollment Cards
- Picture ID or Driver's License
- Income information such as Social Security benefits, Public Assistance, Wages, Dividend Information, Bank Accounts)
- Death Certificate

***Prioritize your needs. Start with the essential burial needs and work from there. The total cost of a burial can become very expensive. Remember funds may be limited. Ask if alternatives are available.***

## **Basic burial items or services to consider are:**

Casket Purchase	Transportation of casket
Cremation Costs	Transportation of the body
Urn for cremated remains	Embalming
Funeral home costs	Travel expenses for family
Burial site preparation	Cross for Burial site and or/preparation
Memorial Stone	Cost for feasts/potluck
Cover box for casket	Memorial Pamphlet

## **Planning Burial/Memorial Services**

If the deceased person died at a hospital in Anchorage, immediately notify the hospital of your choice of funeral homes, or they will pick one for you. Prices for services vary significantly so check which ones offer discounts to Alaska Natives. A list of Anchorage funeral homes is provided on page 12 of this booklet. Be sure to let the hospital know your wishes.

If cremation is chosen, this may take a few days to arrange the details. To be cremated the deceased remains are sent out to a funeral home in Anchorage. Knowing this will help you plan for each stage of the process and the type of burial service including the timeline to plan funeral services.

If the person died of natural causes and the authorities will not require an autopsy or embalming, you will need to keep the body as cool as possible. Burial should be within a week if the deceased is not embalmed. Embalming may take 3-7 days to complete. Embalming is where the bodily fluids are removed by a memorial chapel to help preserve the body before a burial can take place. Embalming is not required within the State of Alaska. Embalming services are not available in Dillingham so the deceased will need to be transported to Anchorage for this to occur. Understanding this will help you with planning timelines for funeral services and to control costs.

**The following are additional questions which may help you think about some of the decisions that need to be made. The questions are put into groups to help in planning. Please take your time and consider the expenses of the choices made.**

**Remember to keep a record of who you talked with, what they will do and what costs may be incurred. Save all receipts!**

**Agency Question:** When contacting agencies, these types of questions may be asked:

- Where was the deceased person residing at the time of death?
- Which tribe was the deceased tribally enrolled with?
- Was the deceased person a shareholder of a Native corporation? Which one(s)?
- What money did the deceased person have at the time of death? Bank accounts may only be accessed by individual signers on the account. If the deceased did not have a co-signer on the account and the funds may not be accessed or released until the estate probate is completed.
- Was the deceased person in the military? Can discharge papers be located?
- Did the deceased person have a burial account set up?
- Who are the deceased person's next of kin (family)?
- What expenses can the family/household members afford to provide?

**Funeral Service Questions:** (Keep track of costs for funeral services)

- What kind of funeral service will take place?
- What is your estimated timeline for services?
- Who will officiate the funeral or memorial service?
- Would you want a funeral home service and/or viewing if the deceased person is in another community before transporting the body back home?
- When should the funeral take place?
- Would you like to have a guest registry of who attended the funeral?
- Announcing to the public the time and place of services?
- Who can transport the deceased in a vehicle?

**Burial Service (Site) Questions:** (Keep track of costs for all burial services).

- Where is the deceased person going to be buried?
- Burials on private property should be carefully considered due to other property rights you may not be aware of. Permits may be required.
- If a person was cremated, you may choose to bury the Urn at a cemetery with the deceased remains or spread out over a special area the deceased liked.
- Who do you need to contact to arrange the burial spot in the village?
- Is the cemetery's restricted to burial of members of specific religious affiliation?
- Are there costs or permits required to bury the deceased in a plot?
- Who will transport the casket to/from locations in the community where the burial services are?
- Is there protocol for where the cross should be located (head of casket)
- Who will be the pallbearers? (Persons who carry the casket)
- Who will help to dig the grave site? (Ask the caretakers of the cemetery if they allow or do not allow the use of heavy equipment to dig the grave site. You do not want to disturb other grave sites.)
- If it is raining, you will need to cover the site with a tarp, who will provide tarp?
- Who will provide tools (shovels, boards to lay casket on prior to burial, etc.?)
- What are the costs for the burial services? (Equipment use/tools/rope?)
- Will you have a box cover to place over the casket in the grave?
- What is our timeline for burial services?
- Who will transport the deceased from church to burial site?
- If a burial site is selected, but a cross or headstone is not available at the time of burial, a temporary marker should be placed at the site to ensure of proper location.

**Funeral Home Questions:** (Keep track of costs for all funeral home services).

- Will you require the use of a funeral home for care of the deceased?
- Will the deceased body need to be embalmed?
- Will the deceased be cremated? (If yes, you will need to select an urn.)
- What forms need to be completed at the funeral home?
- Would you want a funeral home service and/or viewing if the deceased person and for how long?
- Will the funeral home clean and dress the deceased?
- Who may preform services at the funeral home?
- What are the hours of operation at the funeral home?
- Are there charges to transport the deceased to the airport?
- Are there package discounts for services to limit costs? Are all services necessary?

**Church Service Questions:**

- What religion was the deceased?
- Who may perform the church service?
- What are the church service requirements?
- What are the church service costs? If not, would you provide donations for church services?
- What does the family need to do during the service?
- Are there special arrangements that the church requires?
- What are the hours or days the church is open for services?
- Will the church provide any services at the home of the deceased or family?

### **Feast or Gathering After the Funeral or Service:**

- Will you want to have a potluck or feast after the funeral and burial?
- Where can the potluck or feast take place?
- Who can help to contact people to bring food for the feast or are you providing the food?
- Who will help set up and clean up?

### **Deceased/Remains Questions:**

In our native culture it is considered an honor to help prepare the deceased properly for a burial. Care should be taken to ensure native traditions are followed. Ask elders the process if you are unsure.

- Keep track of the costs for the deceased.
- Will the deceased be buried or cremated?
- Will the deceased person be embalmed?
- What would you like the deceased to wear? (If the body has an autopsy, the family or the funeral home may dress the body or ask the funeral home to do this for you, but you need to bring loose fitting clothes that will fit the deceased.)
- Who can purchase or pick out the clothes for the deceased person?
- Who will dress the deceased?
- Will shoes be worn?
- Are you going to allow a viewing of the body? (This helps you decide if you're going to need an open or closed casket.)
- Would you want to bring the body home for a viewing for a few days? (If so, the location will need to be kept cool, especially if the body is not embalmed.)
- It is typical to place a white sheet over the deceased before burial. A white twin size top sheet will work folded in half.
- What type of casket should I get?
- Who will make the cross?
- Who will order the death certificate?

### **Casket Selection**

There are many choices in the selection of a casket. You may choose to have a homemade wood casket or a commercial casket made of metal or wood. Both will take between 2-3 days to build or arrive in your community depending on air flights. Prices vary greatly. You may also choose to have an individual in your community help to make a wood casket. The choice is yours.

### **Memorial Booklet/Obituary:** (What are the costs?)

- Would you want a memorial pamphlet for the deceased?
- Who can help you create it?
- Would you want to have pictures included in the memorial pamphlet?
- Who will gather any pictures that may be included in the pamphlet?
- What would you like to say about the deceased in the memorial pamphlet?
- Are you asking for color copies or black and white?
- Are you going to publish an obituary in the local newspaper?

### **Flowers:** What are the costs?

- Are you going to require flowers? Artificial or real?
- Where can you get flowers from?

### **Donations/Requests**

- Would you prefer flowers at the service or prefer donations made in lieu of flowers?
- If you have a preference, please let the public know in advance of funeral service by placing an announcement on the local radio station.

### **Fund Raising**

Fund raising accounts may be established at a financial institution (bank) on behalf of the deceased to pay for funeral costs or help meet the family's immediate need in lieu of flower donations. Some individuals may request this in a will or specify that all donations go to a specific charitable organization. Remember to inform the public of this request prior to the services being held so that they may abide your wishes.

### **Death Certificate**

A death certificate is necessary, so you may obtain a death certificate from the funeral home or with the Bureau of Vital Statistics. The first copy of the death certificate costs \$25.00. Each additional copy costs \$20.00. Processing time can be as short as a few weeks or as long as many months. To request a death certificate, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics at 907 269-0991 or get the request form at [www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/bvs/default.htm](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/bvs/default.htm).

### **Traumatic Deaths**

If the person died unexpectedly from a traumatic or unknown cause of death, the body will be sent into the State of Alaska Medical Examiner (Coroner) office in Anchorage by the Alaska State Troopers for an autopsy. Individuals brought in from a village for emergency medical care to the hospital may be required to have an autopsy. No two deaths are the same, so delays may occur. If the event occurred on the weekend expect more delays. An autopsy may take between 3-7 days. This may delay your ability to make other funeral service arrangements.

Contact information: Medical Examiners (Coroner) office in Anchorage (907) 334-2200 and fax number 907-334-2216. The Alaska State Troopers numbers are: (907) 842-5641 in Dillingham and (907) 246-3346 in King Salmon. The Medical Examiner's office requires an "Authorization for Release of Remains" form to be filled out and faxed back prior to release of the deceased to family or to a funeral home.

If the Medical Examiner required the autopsy, then transportation of the body to Anchorage and back to the community where the deceased died will be paid by the Medical Examiner's Office. The Medical Examiner's office will not pay for transportation beyond this. The coroner's office will not dress or clean the deceased. The Coroner's office will send the body home in the same box it arrived in. A funeral home may pick up the deceased person and provide additional services (embalming, dressing, cremation, etc.) and will help make arrangements to bring the deceased back into the community where they will be buried.

The Medical Examiner's office requires the form "Release Of Remains" to be completed before they will release the deceased to a funeral home. Certain funeral homes will not accept personal property. If you select a funeral home that does not accept personal property it will be the responsibility of the next of kin to make arrangements to pick up the property at the Medical Examiner's Office. Property will NOT be mailed.

If you want an independent autopsy, you may contact the State Medical Examiner's office to locate an individual who is authorized to do this. If this is requested, the body must not be embalmed or cremated before the second autopsy is performed. **The cost for an independent autopsy is very expensive and will not be paid by most agencies.**

## **Death and Grieving**

Death is a very difficult time for families and friends. Grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss. You need to go through grief to heal. Adults and children grieve differently. Grief can bring a wide range of emotions, from deep sadness to anger. Accepting that the reactions are normal is the first step to healing. You can find ways to deal and work through your pain. There is help available. It is a myth that the pain of loss will go away faster if you ignore it.

Be aware that professional help may be needed after losing someone. Make a referral to get help. Grief counseling is available to everyone. You may contact a pastor of a church, a friend or call the Bristol Bay Counseling Center in Dillingham at 842-1230 or 1-800-510-1230.

Healing takes time. Yearly events and the time of year you lost your loved one may remind you of your lost loved one. You may not understand the feelings that are happening a year later, so seek help when this occurs. There are people ready to help you or someone you care about through the process.

**Burial Assistance Agencies offering assistance:**

- **Bristol Bay Native Association Workforce Development Center**  
(For residents residing in the Bristol Bay Region)  
1-888-285-2262 or within Dillingham at 907-842-2262, fax# 842-3498
- **The State of Alaska Public Assistance Office** (ask for burial assistance)  
Toll Free 1-800-478-4372                      Direct #907-269-8950  
Toll Free Fax 1-888-266-1619              Direct Fax # 907-562-1629
- **Bristol Bay Native Corporation** (for BBNC shareholders)  
Toll Free 1-800-426-3602 or Direct 907-278-3602  
Fax # 276-3924
- **Department of Veterans Affairs** (for veterans)  
1-800-478-8387 or on the web at: [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- **Bureau of Indian Affairs** (for persons who may have an Indian trust account)  
Trust Beneficiary Call Center: 1-888-678-3836

***Remember to prioritize your needs. Start with the essential burial needs and work from there. The total cost of a burial can become very expensive. Remember funds may be limited. Ask if alternatives are available.***

**Alaska Tribal Region Contact Information:** (For Shareholders only)

<b>Aleutian Pribilof Island Association:</b>	907-222-2700 or Toll free 1-800-478-2742
<b>Arctic Slope Regional Association:</b>	907-339-6000 or Toll free 1-800-770-2772
<b>Association of Village Council Presidents:</b>	907-543-7481 or Toll free 1-800-478-3521
<b>Bristol Bay Native Association:</b>	907-842-5257 or 1-800-478-5257
<b>Central Council of Tlingit &amp; Haida:</b>	907-586-7134 or Toll free 1-800-344-1432
<b>Chugachmiut:</b>	907-562-4155 or Toll free 1-800-478-4155
<b>Cook Inlet Tribal Council:</b>	907-793-5900 or 1-877-985-5900
<b>Cooper River Native Association:</b>	907-825-8842
<b>Kawerak, Inc.:</b>	907-443-4354 or Toll free 1-800-450-4341
<b>Kodiak Area Native Association:</b>	907-486-9839 or Toll free 1-800-478-5721
<b>Maniilaq Association:</b>	907-442-7652 or Toll free 1-800-478-3312
<b>Metlakatla:</b>	907-886-5872
<b>Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.</b>	907-452-8251 or Toll free 1-800-478-6822

**Bristol Bay Region Village Contacts all with Alaska Area Code: 907**

Tribally enrolled members in Bristol Bay Region may call tribal council office directly.

**Aleknagik:** 842-2080  
Fax: 842-2081

**Koliganek:** 596-3434  
Fax: 596-3462

**Chignik Bay:** 749-2445  
Fax: 749-2423

**Levelock:** 287-3031  
Fax: 287-3032

**Chignik Lagoon:** 840-2881  
Fax: 840-2217

**Manokotak:** 289-2067  
Fax: 289-1235

**Chignik Lake:** 845-2212  
Fax: 845-2217

**Naknek:** 246-4210  
Fax: 246-3563

**Clarks Point:** 236-1427  
Fax: 236-1428

**New Stuyahok:** 693-3173  
Fax: 693-3179

**Dillingham:** 842-2384  
Fax: 842-4510

**Newhalen:** 571-1410  
Fax: 571-1535

**Egegik:** 233-2211  
Fax: 233-2312

**Nondalton:** 294-2220  
Fax: 294-2234

**Ekuk:** 842-3842  
Fax: 842-3842

**Perryville:** 853-2203  
Fax: 853-2230

**Ekwok:** 464-3336  
Fax: 464-3378

**Pilot Point:** 797-2208  
Fax: 797-2258

**Igiugig:** 533-3211  
Fax: 533-3217

**Port Heiden:** 837-2296  
Fax: 837-2297

**Iliamna:** 571-1246  
Fax: 571-1256

**Portage Creek:** 277-1105  
Fax: 277-1104

**Ivanoff Bay:** 522-2263  
Fax: 522-2363

**South Naknek:** 631-3648  
Fax: 631-0949

**Kanatak:** 357-5991  
Fax: 357-5992

**Togiak:** 493-5003  
Fax: 493-5005

**King Salmon:** 246-3553  
Fax: 246-3449

**Twin Hills:** 525-4821  
Fax: 525-4822

**Kokhanok:** 282-2202  
Fax: 282-2264

**Ugashik:** 338-7611  
Fax: 338-7659

**Faith Based Organizations**

Faith based organizations may be able to assist you in your time of need while offering guidance of their available services. Below is a list of agencies in Dillingham:

	<u>Phone #</u>
Assembly of God .....	842-2306
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	842-4259
Dillingham Bible Fellowship.....	842-1307
Dillingham Moravian Church .....	842-5477
Dillingham Trinity Lutheran Church.....	842-2404
Holy Rosary Catholic Church .....	842-5581
Seventh Day Adventist Church .....	842-5561
Saint Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church ...	842-5470

**Additional Organization Contacts:**

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation .....	842-5201 or Kanakanak Hospital 1-800-478-5201
Alaska Legal Services .....	842-1452 or 1-888-391-1475

**Anchorage Funeral Homes:**

**Alaska Cook Inlet Funeral Services**

**7216 Lake Otis Parkway**

**Anchorage, AK 99507 907-337-5003, Toll Free 855-337-5003 Attn: Bob Ferrel**

Alaska Native Heritage Memorial Chapel  
440 East Klatt Road  
Anchorage, AK 99515 (907)336-3338

Evergreen Memorial Chapels  
737 E. Streets  
Anchorage, AK (907)279-5477

Evergreen Memorial Chapels  
3804 Spenard Road  
Anchorage, AK (907)279-3741

Witzelben Family Funeral Homes  
P.O. Box 140975  
Anchorage, AK (907)279-1682

***Funeral homes will not release the body of the deceased until full payment is made. Please take this into consideration when making burial plans.***

Kehl's Forest Lawn Mortuary & Crematory  
11621 Old Seward Highway  
Anchorage, AK (907)344-1497

**Caskets/Cross/Cover Box:**

Alaska Casket Company  
Anchorage Alaska  
(907 348-7375 or 888 860-7980)  
[www.alaskacasket.com](http://www.alaskacasket.com)

**Airline Contacts:** (907 prefix)

Alaska Cargo Service 842-2400  
(Bo Darden)

Alaska Island Air 842-5120 or 493-5120

Alaska Pride Air 842-5333, fax 842-1001

Bristol Bay Air Service 842-2227 or 842-7181, fax#842-1952

Denani Air 332-2216

Everts Air Cargo Toll free: 1-866-242-0009, in Dillingham, 842-5333

Grant Aviation: Toll free: 1-888-604-7268, Dillingham 842-2955, Fax 842-

Iliamna Air: 571-1245

Mulchatna Air 842-4500

Northern Air Cargo Toll Free: 800-478-3330, Dillingham 842-2400  
King Salmon 246-3461

Pen Air: 842-5559, fax

Shannon's Air 842-842-2735, fax 842-2545

Tucker Aviation 842-1023, fax 842-2604

This form may help you come up with ideas for a cross or monument:

**PREPARATION**

**Type of Cross:**           Standard or Russian Orthodox

How you would like the cross to be labeled with the name:

**First Name;**                   \_\_\_\_\_

**Middle Name or Initial:**   \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Name:**                   \_\_\_\_\_

**Suffix (Jr, Sr, Etc.)**       \_\_\_\_\_

**Born:**                           \_\_\_\_\_

**Died:**                           \_\_\_\_\_

**Cross Color (Circle One):**   White or Natural Wood

**Would you like to put a short “Beloved” saying on cross?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Saying to be listed on the cross:** You may pick one or more. You may also choose your own individualized saying like a nickname if you prefer, but this may be limited. Be sure to ask.

<b><u>“Beloved”</u></b>	Father	Mother	Son	Daughter
	Sister	Brother	Uncle	Aunt
	Niece	Nephew	Grandpa	Grandma
	Ulla	Uppa	Friend	
	Friend			

How would you prefer the order listed on the cross after beloved? Example: Beloved Father, brother & uncle)

Pick the order you prefer:                   1. \_\_\_\_\_   2. \_\_\_\_\_   3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Church Name:** Yes or No   \_\_\_\_\_

**Nickname:**   Yes or No   \_\_\_\_\_

**Image:** Yes or No (Ask if this can be done such as Flower, Boat, Bible, Praying Hands)

**Expected Date of Funeral:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Town:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place of Funeral:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Burial Location:**           \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Log Form: (make additional copies if needed)**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of conversation:**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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