New York Buddhist Church

**FUNERAL GUIDELINES**



332 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025

Ph: 212-678-0305

Web: newyorkbuddhistchurch.org

Rev. Earl Ikeda, Resident Minister

Cell: Email:

*It is difficult to know what to do when a loved one has passed away. We hope this guide will help you with funeral arrangements so you can spend more time with your family.*

*Please feel free to call the church office if you have any questions or concerns. The office can arrange for you to meet with the Minister. You may also contact the minister directly.*

**This guide contains:** procedures for planning a funeral, religious services and their meaning, and a planning worksheet.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS Page #s**

**What to do right after death**

Contact your Doctor or Coroner 4

Contact your Minister 4

Contact a Funeral Home 5

Contact Relatives and Close Friends 5

**Types of funeral services**

Funeral Service (with casket) 6

Funeral Service (with urn) 6

Family Memorial Service (Hoji) 7

**After the service arrangements**

Acknowledgments 8

Funeral Planning Worksheet 9

Sample Service Program 10

Listing of Volunteers 11

**Financial guidelines** 12

# WHAT TO DO RIGHT AFTER DEATH

**Contact your doctor or coroner**. As soon as death occurs, you should contact your doctor or coroner. This will allow the body to be released to

the funeral home.

**Contact your minister or the Church** office as soon as possible. If you desire a “Makuragyo” (Pillow Service) just before death or immediately after death, the Minister should be informed of your request. The Makuragyo Service would usually be with family members and close friends and is held at Home, Hospital or Funeral Home. This Service is not as common as it was in the past, but is one of the traditional Services.

If you are unable to make the funeral arrangements, you may select some family member or close friend to act on behalf of the family to make the funeral arrangements. This is critical in order to have one contact that the

funeral home and the church can call for instructions.

# Speaking with the Minister

When contacting the minister, please have information available so he can help you with the arrangements.

1. Please have the full name of the deceased person and your name and phone number or the person making the arrangements.
2. Give exact location of the place of death. (either home or the hospital)
3. Give good directions to arrange meeting with the minister.
4. Have the history of the deceased including date of birth, date of death, family members both alive and deceased, a Buddhist name or Homyo (if available).
5. If you have an idea of who you would like in the funeral service such as service chairman, pall bearers, ushers, receptionist, etc. please

have their contact information available.

**Contact a funeral home.** The New York Buddhist Church can refer you to a funeral service we have worked with. You may use them or a funeral home of your choice. The funeral home will make arrangements to pick up the body, and,depending on the funeral home, have various services you can select.

# Speaking with the Funeral Home

Once the funeral home is selected, they will work with the doctor or coroner, and minister to make the arrangements. The funeral home will need the following information.

1. Exact spelling of full, legal name.

1. Birth date and birth place
2. Social Security number
3. Address
4. Length of residence
5. Name of spouse
6. Name and birth place of father
7. Maiden name and birthplace of mother
8. Cause of death
9. Place of burial or cremation

The funeral home should offer information on the following:

1. Preparation of body
2. Casket or Urn selection
3. Physical facilities for funeral and final service
4. Funeral cortege and cars
5. Cremation or burial arrangements
6. Obituary notices

They may also assist in the following services:

1. Obtaining the Death Certificate
2. Providing a cremation certificate in the event of cremation.
3. Social Security death benefits
4. Insurance claims
5. Veterans and union benefits

The funeral home and the minister may also ask you if there were any wishes of the deceased, feelings of the family members, cost considerations, accessibility of the final resting place. This information is important for both the funeral home and the minister to choose the proper arrangements.

# Contact relatives and close friends

Contacting relatives and friends either by telephone, in person, or by email should be made as soon as circumstances allow for them to help in the funeral arrangements.

# TYPES OF FUNERAL SERVICES :

Funeral Service (with casket) or Sogi-Memorial (with urn).When meeting with the minister, he will ask you what type of service you would like.

This includes the following:

* Funeral or Memorial Conference
* Printing of program
* Funeral or Memorial Service including presentation of Homyo (Buddhist

Dharma name)

**Funeral Service with casket**.

The service is held either at the funeral home or church. To prepare for this service, a meeting with the minister will need to be arranged. The considerations needed are: *(see worksheet at end of this document to aid you with this).*

1. Select if the funeral will be at the church or funeral home.
2. If visitation is requested, plan on when and where this will take place.
3. If cremation is requested, planning for this should also be discussed.
4. Decide if a chain call or announcement will be requested.

**Funeral Service with an urn (Sogi-Memorial Service)**

This service also can be held either at funeral home or church. The process in planning this service is similar to the Funeral Service with a Casket but planning for a Hearse is not required.

# Other Considerations

**Flowers.** It is the family responsibility. The church can make suggestions.

**Refreshments after the Service.** If the Service is held at the church, any food served is at the discretion of the family. Each funeral home may have different policies on refreshments.

# Family Memorial Service (Hoji)

In Buddhism, there are additional services that help the family cope with the death and remember their loved ones. Traditionally, following the main service, there is a schedule of follow-up services.

1. **The 7th Day Service** (this is sometimes conducted with the family and close friends immediately after the main Funeral service.)
2. The first Obon service after the death, the family would participate in the **Hatsubon** (literally first Obon) service. The family is encouraged to participate in the Obon Odori or Obon dancing to honor the departed.
3. **Memorial Services** are normally held at the church on the first Sunday of the month and families are encouraged to attend the service on the anniversary of the death.
4. In addition to the yearly memorial service, **Special Memorial**

**Services** are observed on the 7th day, 49th day, 100th day, 1st, 3rd, 7th,

13th, 17th, 25th, 33rd, and 50th years. All of these services do not need to be observed but are listed for your information.

*The practice of counting years in the Asian system begins with the year of death being the first year so the second year memorial would be one year after the death. These services can be observed at the monthly memorial service or if the family wishes to have a private service with family and close friends, they may request a* ***Hoji Service*** *and they can schedule arrangements with the minister or Temple office*.

# AFTER THE SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

**Acknowledgments**. The family should acknowledge those who participated in the funeral service. The listing below indicates customary types of acknowledgments and to whom they are made. Specific amounts are at the family’s discretion but the church can provide guidelines and suggestions. Acknowledgments should be made as soon as possible after the funeral service.

# Church or other organizations – monetary

# Pianist, Custodian – monetary

# Pallbearers, ushers, etc. – card

* **Minister** – monetary
* **Chairperson** – gift or card
* **Koden** (monetary gifts from friends) – card and/or stamps
* **Flowers** – card

# Email or letters – card or email

# Finances. *The following are customary expenses incurred when a family member passes away.*

1. Casket or urn
2. Plot, niche, vault or Nokotsudo (room in the temple for storing the urn)
3. Burial fee
4. Marker or headstone
5. Upkeep of final resting place
6. Death Certificate
7. Funeral home charges (body preparation, other services)
8. Acknowledgments
9. Legal paperwork and advice
10. Ministerial fees
11. Church fees

**FUNERAL PLANNING WORKSHEET**

**Name:**

**Date of Birth: Date of Rest:**

**Address:**

**Spouse:**

**Children & Grandchildren:**

**Contact person:**

**Name:**

**Phone #:**

**Email:**

**Relationship:**

**Brief history of deceased:**

**SAMPLE FUNERAL PROGRAM**

# Chairperson Pianist

**Order of Service:**

**Kansho** (Tolling of the Bell)

**Kanzen Dokkyo** (Sutra Chant in front of Casket or Urn): by Minister

**Homyo** (Presentation of Buddhist Name): by Minister

**Opening Words**: byChairperson

**Sutra Chanting** “Shoshinge”: by Minister and Congregation

**Incense Offering** (by Family, Relatives, Pallbearers and Guests)

# Incense Offering (by Representatives)

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# Eulogy

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gobunsho** and **Dharma Talk by Minister**    **Gatha** (family remains seated)  **Words of Appreciation**    **Closing Remarks** by Chairperson  **FINANCIAL GUIDELINES**: *The following Guidelines are* ***suggested*** *amounts. These figures provide a starting point for discussion with the Minister while reviewing service arrangements with family or representative).*    **Makuragyo** (bedside pillow service)  $100 Orei/Appreciation to Minister    **Family Viewing Service** (at Funeral Home)  $100 Orei/Appreciation to Minister   Funeral Service (with casket) or Sogi-Memorial (with urn), includes: Funeral or Memorial Planning Conference  Printing of program  Funeral or Memorial Service  Presentation of Homyo (Buddhist Name) If held at the Church\*(please ask Minister or Church Treasurer about guidelines) $ Donation to Church  $ Orei/Appreciation to Minister  $ Orei/ to Pianist (if requested)  $ Custodial Service If held at Funeral Home $250 Donation to Church  $250 Orei/Appreciation to Minister    The family is responsible for food purchased for after the Service, as well as acknowledgment cards and postage.  Donations to the church, and orei to minister, pianist and custodian should each be placed in separate envelopes and given to the minister or church office after the Service.   Hoji Service If the family wishes to have a Hoji (family memorial service), please make arrangements with the Minister.  $100 Donation to Church  $100 Orei/Appreciation to Minister   Nokotsudo (Columbarium) If you wish to place your family member’s ashes at the temple, please contact Rev. Earl Ikeda to discuss arrangements.  \*It is customary to make a yearly donation to the Eitaikyo Fund for perpetual care.  \*\*If you wish to place ashes at the Columbarium at Cypress Hills Cemetery, please see the Minister to discuss the timing and donation for opening and placing ashes within. | | |  |  |
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