

SHERBURNE COUNTY CREMATION AND FUNERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Revised 11/16/21

PURPOSE:

Sherburne County provides County burials in recognition of the need of some residents for the service and in compliance with the responsibility prescribed by Minnesota Statutes 261.035 and 261.04. Policies pertaining to burials are approved by the County Board of Commissioners.

POLICY:

Sherburne County Health & Human Services will pay up the maximum set by this policy for the cremation or funeral expenses for recipients of Public Assistance and other indigent persons whose resources are insufficient to meet the cost, or the resources of a responsible relative (spouse or parents of minor child) are insufficient to meet the cost of a burial. Unless it is contrary to the deceased's religious beliefs or values, the method of disposal will be by cremation. Sherburne County Funeral policy will be followed for all persons who are the Financial Responsibility of Sherburne County.

Applications for a County Burial shall be completed, and an authorization given to the Funeral Director to render services *prior* to those services being given.

If resources available to the deceased or legally responsible relative (parent or spouse) are greater than the maximum amounts provided in this policy, County assistance will be denied. If available resources are less than the maximum amounts provided in this policy, the application will be approved, but any available resources less than the maximum amounts will be deducted from the County's contribution. This policy does not prohibit persons who are not legally responsible from making a gift contributions or memorial to supplement cremation or burial services.

A claim will be filed against the estate of the deceased for any funds expended by the County. Sherburne County Collections Unit will be tasked with the assignment of collection against the decedent's estate.

If the deceased is entitled to death benefits from any source (burial/life insurance policies, pre-paid funeral, VA or Social Security death benefit, proceeds from bank accounts, stocks or bonds, vehicles, equity in real estate, etc.) these funds will be considered in determining if the deceased or legally responsible relative has sufficient resources to pay burial expenses. Proceeds received from benefits, fundraisers, crowdfunding sources (i.e.: GoFundMe accounts, etc.) on behalf of the deceased will be considered an available resource.

The surviving spouse and parents of minor descendants are responsible by law to assist with burial cost. No funeral expenses will be paid by the County if the resources of the deceased or legally responsible relatives are sufficient to pay the funeral expenses.

To access funds in a deposit account for the deceased party the legally responsible representative can use an Affidavit for Collections of Personal Property along with a certified copy of the death certificate to present to the financial institution to gain access to these funds.

The total amount of costs allowable for funeral and burial/cremation expenses shall not exceed the following:

| <u>ALLOWABLE COST</u> | <u>ACTUAL EXPENSES UP TO:</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Direct Cremation: | \$2,000 (no services) |
| Immediate Burial: | \$2,600 (no services) |

Direct Cremation includes:
Removal from place of death, private identification, transport to crematory, minimum cremation container, minimum urn, cremation, file death certificate.

Immediate Burial includes:
Removal from place of death, private identification, transport to cemetery, minimum casket, minimum grave liner, opening & closing of grave, file death certificate. Embalming will be paid only when the 72-hour rule cannot be enforced, the cost for embalming shall not exceed \$200.

The County's contribution shall not be available for enhancements such as flowers, a more costly casket, memorial products, etc.

Additional amounts include transportation, outside of this general trade area, at \$1.30 per loaded mile and/or billed airfreight charges, where appropriate. Maximum not to exceed \$50. The general trade area is defined as a distance that is outside a 20-mile radius from Elk River.

A grave marker with the deceased's name and date of death on it must be part of any county-paid burial. It shall be placed upon the grave site within two months of burial. Costs are included within the maximum funeral amount.

PROCEDURES:

An application for a county burial must be completed and signed by a family member, legal representative, or other interested party *prior* to receipt of services.

Application will be reviewed for eligibility by the Financial Assistance Supervisor or lead worker.

Funeral Director will need to provide an itemized statement of Goods and Services. The Financial Assistance Supervisor or lead worker will give verbal approval by phone to be followed up by the County Letter of Authorization to the Funeral Director that the County will pay for the funeral, up to the guidelines for payment established. **Approval for county payment must be given by the county prior to services being rendered.**

Supervisor or lead worker will refer to Collection Officer for claim against estate.

Passed by the County Board of Commissioners on 11/16/21.