MOUNTAIN VIEW FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

GUIDE FOR PREPARATION FOR DEATH AND MEMORIALS

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The Religious Society of Friends
Mountain View Friends Monthly Meeting (MVFM)
Denver, Colorado
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Updated by Death & Memorials Committee of MVFM from a 1986 version

"There are two different aspects of preparing for death; the first is preparing for one's own death, and the second is preparing for the death of another - whether a beloved friend, or even a stranger – preparing in such a way as to be of greatest comfort and support for those who mourn, including yourself."

– Preparation for Death, a handbook of Tempe Monthly Meeting, as noted in *IMYM Faith and Practice*, 2009, p. 109

"The memorial meeting is for those left behind and is encouraged."

--*IMYM Faith and Practice*, 2009, p. 113.

"None of us escape death, but we can all make it easier on those we leave behind."

--Website for Funeral Consumer Society of Colorado, 2023

This material provides suggestions consistent with Quaker traditions for the inevitable event of death. It addresses several areas, including plans for one's own dying and death, for managing before and immediately after the death of a loved one, and for the help and support the Meeting can offer the bereaved survivors.

The outline also is intended to help Meeting Friends respond to a death in the Meeting family. Each situation is unique, and no outline can substitute for the judgment, warmth, and helpfulness of the individuals who take responsibility in time of need. It can only provide a framework and guide for what needs to be done.

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I. Preparation for Death: Some Queries That May Help

Although a part of life, death frequently takes us unawares. Therefore, it is especially important not to let misunderstanding or hurt go unattended. It is never too soon to seek resolution of differences, forgiveness for our own errors, and reconciliation with those who may have injured us.

The following is a list of queries to consider in preparing for death. It is helpful to plan so that family or friends do not have the burden after a loved one has died.

A. Do you have telephone numbers or contact information in a well-advertised location of physicians, hospital, or emergency rooms in the event of a health emergency or serious injury?
B. Do your physicians and attorney have copies of your Living Will or Medical Durable Power of Attorney in case you should become incapacitated?
C. Do you have a will in proper legal form and is it in a safe but accessible location? (A financial institution may seal a safe deposit box until after probate.)
    1. Do you review it periodically to keep it up to date?
    2. Can witnesses be available if needed?
    3. Does the family know who is the executor?
    4. Have you named a legal guardian for minor children in case of death of both parents? (The legal guardian(s) should have agreed previously to this responsibility.) Without such designation, the State will appoint a guardian.
    5. Are financial bequests, personal and charitable, still appropriate in case total assets have changed? (For example, by percentage of net revenue rather than specific dollar amounts.)
    6. Have you considered listing, in a letter separate from the will, personal items for relatives and friends who might especially appreciate them, and designating a person to conduct this request?
D. Do your family or close friends know where to find important documents and information? This would include:
    1. Records of your assets and insurance policies.
    2. ALL your personal papers: will, birth and marriage certificates, military, and Social Security records. A surviving spouse needs his or her own birth certificate and Social Security ID when applying for Social Security benefits.

3. Names of people and organizations to notify in case of death such as relatives, friends, and advisors (legal, insurance, and financial).
4. Serial numbers of bank accounts, credit cards, passbooks, trust accounts, inventory of safe deposit box and location of key, information on outstanding debts.
5. Names of insurance companies and agents; policy numbers of life, accidental, medical, car, household, and mortgage insurance.
6. Stocks, bonds, investments, warranties, guarantees, and purchase receipts.
7. Information on deeds, statement of real estate transactions, home improvements, mortgages, tax receipts, and title certificates.
8. Copies of your Living Will or Medical Durable Power of Attorney instructions for funeral arrangements and disposal of your body.
9. Updated smart phone, primary email, and computer log-ins; password manager that includes an emergency plan explaining how to transfer access; and a list of security questions and answers you use. This information is important for your survivors or friends to access information important for your end of life, such as online financial information.

E. Have you left written instructions about disposal of your body? (See Section II.)
   1. Does your spouse or whoever is responsible for the decisions concur with your wishes?
   2. Have you made prior arrangements if you wish to donate your body or body parts, and signed required forms? (In this case, embalming cannot take place.)
   3. If cremation is desired, have you left instructions for disposal of the ashes?
   4. If burial is preferred, have you arranged for and purchased a plot, and is the deed for the plot readily available?

F. Have you filed at home or given instructions stating your wishes regarding funeral arrangements and a memorial meeting? Have you also considered any special feelings of the survivors regarding such arrangements?

G. Have you discussed with family, close friends, and your medical provider what you would like to do if you have a terminal illness? Colorado allows the option of aid-in-dying under a statute, 25-48-191, C.R.S., voters approved in 2016. The law permits such terminally ill persons to take a prescribed medication to terminate their lives if they meet the following eligibility requirements:
   - 18 years or older
   - A resident of Colorado

- Terminally ill
- Acting voluntarily
- Given a prognosis of six months or less to live
- Mentally capable of making their own health care decisions
- Capable of self-administering and ingesting the aid-in-dying drug

For more information, see https://www.denverhealth.org/patients-visitors/amenities-experience/end-of-life-options.

II. Choices Regarding Disposal of the Body

The first action after death occurs is likely to be the disposal of the body. If the surviving spouse or next closest kin does not have decisions and directions already made well before death, he or she may be pressured into costly arrangements.

A. Burial

Burial has been traditional in our culture. It basically requires mortuary services of transportation and a casket; embalming and other services are optional. Even a simple funeral must bear its share of the cost of running an establishment that has to be on call 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and to provide many types of arrangements as required. A funeral should be appropriate and in keeping with the dignity of a person, even in death. Some funeral directors will accept prepayment, which will freeze the expense at the amount and time paid. The Funeral Consumer Society of Colorado ***(https://funeralconsumercolorado.org)*** maintains an online list of prices of funeral and cremation services offered by various funeral homes in Colorado.

1. Social Security provides a burial allowance for the spouse only. The burial allowance must be applied for. ***(https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-burial-funds.htm#:~:text=DOES%20A%20BURIAL%20FUND%20COUNT,Supplemental%20Security%20Income%20(SSI).***
2. The Veterans Administration will supply a marker and an allowance upon submission of honorable discharge information. A plot in a national cemetery may be available, subject to space. If the veteran is buried in a private cemetery, an allowance will be provided. **(https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/)**

3. If an individual on Medicaid has no financial resources, the Colorado Department of Human Services – Burial Assistance Program will provide some funds. (*https://drive.google.com/file/d/186Nnb4eQkjHLO8jqaASaci7iaOlRxDM8/view*)

B. Green Burial

Green Burial means no embalmed bodies because the invasive process uses toxic chemicals for temporary preservation; no vaults or grave-liners because they are typically plastic, fiberglass or cement; only biodegradable material allowed in the plot, including biodegradable shrouds and caskets; and allowing hand-lowering with ropes.

The Natural Funeral has a green burial section at the Lyons Town Cemetery that opened in 2020. See ***https://www.thenaturalfuneral.com*** for more information. Other area cemeteries have since opened other green burial sections.

C. Cremation

Cremation is simple to arrange, does not involve embalming, and is relatively inexpensive. In Colorado, a funeral director's services are required, and the body must be presented to the crematory in a "container", which the funeral director can provide. Colorado law does not require a "casket" as such. Check the Funeral Consumer Society of Colorado website (***https://funeralconsumercolorado.org***) for prices of cremation services of various funeral homes throughout Colorado.

The crematorium usually returns the ashes in a triple cardboard box (a 7-inch cube) enclosing a plastic bag. The ashes may be put into an urn, scattered, buried in a family plot if the cemetery management permits, or otherwise disposed of.

D. Water Cremation or Alkaline Hydrolysis

Water cremation, also known as alkaline hydrolysis, is "green cremation, eco cremation or aquamation with a much smaller environmental impact than flame cremation. It uses a bathtub of warm water with alkaline compounds to do what would occur naturally with a green burial when the body is placed in the earth. It has been legal in Colorado since 2011," according to the website for The Natural Funeral (***https://www.thenaturalfuneral.com***).

E. Body Composting or Natural Reduction

Body Composting (Natural Reduction) transforms human remains into soil. The process occurs in a vessel that is safely sheltered in an environmentally controlled facility. Over the course of a few months, natural microbial activity converts the body into a rich, organic, life-giving soil. The temperature in the vessel naturally rises during the Body Composting process. This sterilizes and stabilizes the contents as the conversion takes place. Once the reduction process is complete, about a cubic yard of soil remains. This soil can be returned to families or donated to farms that grow flowers or other non-edible plants. This process became legal in Colorado in 2021. The Natural Funeral website (***https://www.thenaturalfuneral.com***) has more information about the process.

F. Donation

A donation of the whole body may be made to the State Anatomical Board of the Anschutz University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Arrangements must be made before death. Call general information at the hospital, 303-724-2410. The website is ***https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/state-anatomical-board***. For donation of body parts, call the same number or 720-848-0000**.**

In addition, Colorado permits applicants for driver's licenses to state that they wish to donate their organs in case of death. Those driver's licenses have a heart symbol. Be sure to notify family and friends and note it in your end-of-life plans so that they are not surprised. *https://www.donatelifecolorado.org/*

G. Death in a Foreign Country

Contact the American Embassy in the country where the death has occurred for information and assistance.

H. Funeral Consumer Society of Colorado

The non-profit Funeral Consumer Society of Colorado does not give discounts on burials or cremations to members. However, it provides unbiased educational information on planning for the end of life to those who join. A single two-year membership includes a hard copy of the 60-page Funeral Consumer Society of Colorado Handbook. The handbook covers such topics as what to do when someone dies, the need for estate planning, medical powers of attorney, living wills, body donation, organ donation, simple or elaborate burial arrangements, cremation, veterans' rights, advance directives, and

memorial services. For use of the website (*https://funeralconsumercolorado.org*), the Society suggests donations. Society members make their own cemetery arrangements.

III. When Death Occurs: Guide for Family and Friends

This is a guide for family members, friends, or Meeting committee members who may need to carry out the following tasks:

A. The cause of death. Who determines the cause of death is largely a function of where the death takes place. See the Colorado Bar Association document: *What to do when someone dies flyer 2019.pdf*
   1. If death takes place in a medical facility (hospital, nursing home, or assisted living facility), the staff of the medical facility will make a pronouncement of death, prepare the paperwork for organ or body donation, turn off or remove any equipment attached to the body, and coordinate with the mortuary or crematory for the transport of the body.
   2. If the death occurs at home, Colorado law requires a qualified medical professional to be notified and make the pronouncement of death. If the death was unattended, the family physician, hospice provider, or coroner's office for the county where the death took place should be called. Some counties also may require notification of law enforcement.
   3. If death is violent or accidental, call 911 or, if your community or county does not use 911, the emergency number listed on the inside cover of your telephone directory.

B. Contact the Anschutz University of Colorado Health Sciences Center or other pre-arranged body/part recipient if the body or body part is to be donated. A prior arrangement must have been made.
   1. Authorize donation of body or body parts. A donor card and approval of next-of-kin are required. This must be done at the first possible moment.

C. Call the Meeting Clerk, who will contact the clerk of the Death and Memorials Committee. The latter will check Meeting files for instructions the deceased may have left or contact members of the family or close friends about the location of such instructions.

D. Contact the pre-selected funeral director. Otherwise, select a mortuary and arrange for cremation, burial, or transportation of the body. Take someone with you to discuss services and costs. In case of cremation, arrange for disposition of ashes.
E. Notify the deceased's lawyer, who should have a copy of the will.
F. Set the time and place for the memorial service.
G. Notify relatives, employer, friends, and business and professional associates.
H. Keep a running list of calls and communications received about the death of the deceased.
I. Assign the writing of the obituary notice. Include names of immediate family, time and place of memorial service, and where memorial gifts, if preferred to flowers, should be sent.
J. Deliver the obituary to the mortuary for distribution via websites or, in some cases, local newspapers. List organizations and journals that should receive a copy of the obituary.
K. Write or have printed a card to notify friends at a distance. Meeting members can help with this mailing.
L. Arrange for the acknowledgment of calls not personally received, letters of condolences, and memorial gifts. The mortuary may provide cards.
M. Obtain eight or more certified copies of the death certificate**.** They are needed for family members, Probate Court, insurance claims, Social Security claims, stocks, securities, banks, and other entities.
N. Go through the deceased's calendar and cancel appointments.

IV. Family Responsibilities Before and Following the Funeral or Memorial Meeting

A. Before the funeral or memorial meeting:
    1. Compile biographical material.
    2. Decide if the memorial minute should be submitted to Mountain Views, the Meeting archivist, Intermountain Yearly Meeting, Friends Bulletin and/or Friends Journal.
    3. Write a statement or eulogy and decide who will read it at the memorial or funeral service.
    4. Create and print a program, if desired, to distribute at the memorial or funeral service.
    5. Send invitations to friends and family living in the Denver metro area.

6. Decide if friends and family unable to attend may submit comments and who will read them.
7. Decide what music, if any, will be played before or after the service and the method of playing the music.
8. Decide if the memorial service should include special readings and who should read them.
9. Select photographs and other illustrations, possibly including videos, about the life of the deceased.
10. Decide if the family will provide beverages and food or if the Meeting should provide a potluck.
11. Decide whether to provide a guest book and, if so, who will staff the book for guests to sign.

B. Following the funeral or memorial meeting:

1. Arrange for family acknowledgement of calls not personally received, letters of condolences, and memorial gifts. Mortuary may provide cards, if requested.
2. Notify life and other appropriate insurance companies and file claim forms. (A list of policies should be available.)
3. Apply for appropriate benefits (See II.A above for a.-c.)
   a. Social Security
   b. Veterans Administration
   c. Colorado Department of Human Services – Burial Assistance Program
   d. Medicare for hospital bills of decedent if he/she was eligible.
   e. Pension from former employer may be available.
   f. Workmen's Compensation through employer of decedent may be sought.
4. Notify the bank or other financial institution to remove the name of decedent from joint accounts.
5. Notify stockbroker to remove name of decedent from jointly owned stocks and to suspend any open orders of the decedent.
6. Cancel credit cards of the decedent and destroy them.
7. Meet with a lawyer to begin probate proceedings if needed.
8. Notify tax preparer/accountant unless estate lawyer is preparing final tax returns.

v. Special Responsibilities of Meeting Committees Regarding Death and Memorials in the Meeting

Members of the Meeting strive to support one another with spiritual growth and practical help through emergencies, terminal illness, and bereavement. The following is intended to help Friends plan for and respond to death in the Meeting family.

A. Clerk of the Meeting: He or she should be notified promptly of a death within the Meeting.
   1. Notifies the clerk of Death and Memorials, who will coordinate participation of other committees (Care & Counsel; Worship, Ministry & Membership; and Hospitality)
   2. Sees that a memorial minute is prepared and accepted at a Meeting for Business. Members of the Death & Memorials Committee and family and friends of the deceased often work together on preparation of the memorial minute. Copies of the memorial minute should be sent to appropriate Friends' publications if family and friends desire.

B. Death & Memorials Committee: Designates one or two people as liaison with the family and friends to ascertain their wishes and assist as needed:
   1. Review immediate decisions and actions needed. (See Section III.) Provide information and arrange for mortuary, cremation, or other means of disposing of the body, if the family desires.
   2. Write announcements for Friends' and other publications.
   3. Notify friends and relatives.
   4. Provide meals and housing for out-of-town family and friends for the first few days.
   5. Provide transportation if needed (airport, shopping, and other purposes).
   6. Seek a volunteer to stay in the home overnight if the survivor is alone and desires such company.
   7. Plan memorial meeting with the family.
      a. Phone or e-mail the family to express condolences, offer support, and ascertain the family's wishes.
      b. Discuss with the family the date and location of the memorial and the kind of memorial service desired, and attend to the arrangements:
         i. Seating

ii. Décor
iii. Content of service, welcoming and explanation of service and closure
iv. Inclusion of biographical material
v. Music
vi. Readings
vii. Reception
viii. Food

c. Decide on the most suitable facilities by finding out from the family the expected numbers in attendance and desire for a livestream option. Share information with the family regarding costs, address, type of facility, audio-visual system, etc. Possible facilities include:
   i. Columbine Meetinghouse holds about 150 people and is free to members and attenders (although donations are encouraged). Check the Meetinghouse calendar (*https://webmail.centurylink.net/app/Utilities/gateway_url.asp?umsgid=%7B3f05e3ad-049b-40fe-bb62-88d3525b8871%7D&uurl=https%3A//calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/embed%3Fsrc%3Dannouncements.mtnviewfriends@gmail.com%26ctz%3DAmerica/Denver*) for availability and ask the Announcements Committee to reserve space at the Meetinghouse.
   ii. The family of the deceased will usually pay for other facilities that may include:
      - Lakewood United Methodist, 1390 Brentwood St., Lakewood, CO 80226: Large sanctuary space.
      - Park Hill Masonic Lodge, 4819 Montview Boulevard, Denver 80207: Seats at least 100 people.
      - Iliff Shattuck Hall on University of Denver campus at the corner of Iliff Avenue and University Boulevard: Seats a maximum of 300 people, but has chairs for only 100.

8. Place “Save the date” announcements in weekly Meeting written announcements with details to follow; ask how family plans to notify colleagues, friends, family, and others not receiving Meeting announcements; and update announcements as details (address, parking, refreshments, potluck type) are confirmed.

9. Provide refreshments for reception after the memorial service, if requested. Hospitality may be called upon to help.
10. Call upon Care & Counsel for spiritual and family support and to help make telephone calls to people within the Meeting.
11. Arrange for childcare, if needed, during the memorial meeting.

C. Trustees and Finance Committees: When a memorial gift is received, the Trustees or the Finance Committee (or a special committee formed for that purpose) may make suggestions to the Meeting for possible uses.
   1. The Treasurer should immediately acknowledge the receipt of the gift.
   2. The Recording Clerk or Treasurer should write another letter when the use of the gift has been decided, thanking the donor on behalf of the Meeting.

VI. Continuing Responsibilities of the Death and Memorials Committee

A. If Meeting members and attenders so request, keep on file at the Meetinghouse copies of instructions for end-of-life plans and wishes in event of death and biographical information for use in obituary notices. *Members and attenders also are strongly encouraged to prepare and keep such documents themselves and notify family and close friends of their location.*
B. Be aware of terminal illness/hospice programs in the area.
C. Annually sponsor a forum to remind Meeting members and attenders to consider preparations for death and the availability of assistance and information from resource persons and organizations.
D. Keep a list of resource persons and associations in the area.
E. Keep a file of items (e.g., memorial minutes and programs) available from past Meeting memorial services for use as examples in planning memorial meetings and receptions.
F. Periodically review *Preparation for Death and Memorials* and keep at least one bound copy in the Meeting Library.
G. Make sure the Meeting website includes an updated *Preparation for Death and Memorials* and that Meeting members and attenders are periodically informed of its location in Meeting announcements and during each forum.
H. Try to take advantage of books, special workshops, and courses that may be of help in meeting these responsibilities.

VII. Some Additional Resources

Other than the resources mentioned in this document, the following may be of interest. Three of the five have a Quaker focus (B, C and E).

A. NPR program on how end-of-life planning is a gift to your loved ones: ***https://www.npr.org/2020/06/26/884051182/end-of-life-planning-is-a-lifetime-gift-to-your-loved-ones.***
B. Queries for aging, death, and dying: ***https://www.fgcquaker.org/exercises/queries-for-aging-death-and-dying/***
C. A Quaker approach to living with dying: ***https://www.fgcquaker.org/exercises/a-quaker-approach-to-living-with-dying/***
D. The Colorado Senior Blue Book: ***https://seniorsbluebook.com/local/colorado-denver***
E. On Quaker Deathways: Practices Around Death and Dying***:*** ***https://quakerspeak.com/video/deathways/***
F. Your Life Your Priorities: Options for Managing End-of-Life Decisions: *Your Life, Your Priorities - Compassion & Choices*
G. The Colorado Bar Association's website, ***https://www.cobar.org/For-the-Public/Legal-Brochures*****,** for relevant brochures on:

- Advance Medical Directives
- Colorado's Designated Beneficiary Agreement Act
- Elder/Probate Mediation
- Estate Planning
- Living Trusts
- Probate in Colorado
- So Now You Are an Agent Under Financial Powers of Attorney
- So Now You Are a Conservator
- So Now You Are a Guardian
- So Now You Are a Personal Representative
- So Now You Are a Trustee
- What is a Power of Attorney?
- What to Do When Someone Dies
- Wills in Colorado

VIII. Forms for Preparation for Death

A. Withhold CPR, Living Will, and Medical Durable Power of Attorney: These forms may be found within the 2011 Colorado Hospital Association booklet, *Your Right to Make Healthcare Decisions*. These forms are consistent with Colorado law as of 2011. Other websites may have forms more suitable for your needs.

   Please note: Living Wills and Medical Durable Power of Attorney are legal documents. Therefore, they should **not** be kept at the meetinghouse.

   The booklet covers the following topics: accepting medical treatment, refusing medical treatment, living wills, resuscitation directives, substitute decision makers, and medical guardians.

B. End-of-Life Plans and Wishes (in following pages)

C. Biographical Information for Use in Obituary Notice (in following pages)

End-of-Life Plans and Wishes Form
Mountain View Friends Meeting

Please complete page one so that the Death and Memorials Committee has your emergency contact information. Page two has additional information regarding your end-of-life wishes. Please complete page two if you want family and close friends to have this information. **Be sure to keep a copy for your own records in a place that your family or friends can easily access.**

Member/Attender Name:
Home Address:

Phones: home: work: cell:
Email:

Emergency contacts in the event of serious injury/illness, death, or impending death:
First Choice Name:
Address:

Phones: home work cell:
Email:
Second Choice Name:
Address:

Phones: home: work: cell:
Email:

Have you considered leaving at least a small part of your estate to MVFM and/or Quaker Service organizations (FGC, FCNL, AFSC)? Please contact the Death and Memorials Committee for resources to assist you with your estate planning.

Signature Date

Please give this to a family member or close friend and/or mail to:

Mountain View Friends Meeting
Death and Memorials Committee
2280 S. Columbine St.
Denver, CO 80210

Please complete page two if you would also like your family and friends to have specific information on end-of-life plans and wishes.

Additional Information for End-of-Life Plans and Wishes:

I have:

- a will: □yes □no located at/with_____
- advanced directives: □yes □no located at/with_____
- burial/cremation arrangements: □yes □no located at/with_____
- all necessary arrangements completed for end-of-life: □yes □no located at/with_____

Additional Records (give location of record, or name, address, phone no of who has it):
Durable Power of Attorney_____
_____
Medical Power of Attorney_____
_____
Your Attorney_____
_____
Your Physician_____
_____
Health Insurance_____
_____
Preferred Hospital _____
_____
Location of important papers_____
_____
Burial arrangements/cemetery/crematory_____
_____
_____
_____

Specific instructions:
I would like a memorial service □yes □no

Please type or print clearly any special wishes (poems, readings, music) for this gathering or attach additional information if you wish:

Signature_____Date_____

MOUNTAIN VIEW FRIENDS MEETING

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
(for use in obituary notice)

NAME: (include maiden name if married woman)

_____

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH:_____

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

_____

MARRIAGE(S): (When & where, to whom, surviving, widowed, divorced):_____

RECENT OR FORMER BUSINESS OR PROFESSION:_____

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (Including Mountain View Friends Meeting):

_____

_____

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION (Special interests, services, honors, etc.)_____

SURVIVORS & RELATIONSHIP:

_____

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FAMILY CONTACT PERSON TO SUPPLY FOLLOWING INFORMATION AT DEATH:_____

DATE & PLACE OF DEATH & (optional) CAUSE OF DEATH:_____

AGE AT DEATH:_____

MEMORIAL SERVICE (date, time & place):_____

PREFERENCE IN LIEU OF FLOWERS (IF DESIRED):_____