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Preserving Options

Learning from the tradition of Spring Burials

It is very common for burials to be postponed during winter months in northern climates in the US. Bodies are held at the funeral home, in a temporary crypt or in a receiving tomb, from early December through late April until the ground has thawed. An added benefit to this sometimes-lengthy delay is that it gives distant or extended family the opportunity to plan for travelling to attend the burial.

During these challenging times with changing rules and restrictions, we can learn from the techniques funeral directors use to properly preserve and carefully store the deceased -- preserving the option for the family to have a full graveside service once things return to normal.

The following are some things to consider when planning a delayed burial:

Speaking to the family: The following may be helpful points to make with a family that is considering waiting until a fully-attended service can occur:

“Why Your Loved One Deserves to Be Celebrated, No Matter What”

- Delayed burials give family and friends a chance to share stories and memories about your loved one’s life.
- It gives those close to your loved one the closure they need to begin the grieving process.
- Your loved one deserves it. We need to be smart about how we do it, but your loved one’s life is important, and they should be celebrated, even if that means a delayed burial or service.
- Burial is a tradition. During times of chaos and uncertainty, traditions can help us stay grounded and remind us who we are.

Embalming: Your fluid provider may have recommendations regarding how to adjust your fluid mixture when there is a need to hold a body for extended periods of time.

Storage: Commonly, funeral homes planning on delayed burials store properly-embalmed bodies in caskets within their facilities. Depending upon the length of time you plan on holding the deceased, you may want to consider a metal casket as there is less risk of humidity having an impact on the casket.

For those with smaller facilities or larger volumes, you may want to reach out to your local cemeteries to find out what kind of storage capabilities they have. This may include traditional receiving tombs, crypts that can be made available for short-term storage (with proper containment), or secure buildings that can supplement the funeral home’s facilities for storing caskets and vaults.