

# After-Death Planning

Adapted from

## *Death to Dust: What Happens to Dead Bodies?*

2nd edition

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### *Do I have a choice about what happens to me after death? Yes!*

You may normally have your body disposed of in any reasonable manner. "Reasonable" is the operative word, and *you must make your wishes known.*

***For instructions to be followed after death,  
someone has to know about them in advance!***

### *How to use this report*

Charles Lindbergh, the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, laid out exactly how he wanted to be buried, what the funeral was to be like, and what hymns he wanted sung. As soon as he died, his wishes were carried out: he was dressed in his normal clothes and buried, without embalming, in a plain wooden coffin.

On the other hand, former President Franklin D. Roosevelt left a four-page letter with explicit instructions for his funeral. He wanted a very simple funeral with no hearse, lying in state, or embalming. Burial was to be in an unlined grave in a plain wooden casket. Unfortunately, these instructions were found in his safe—three days after his elaborate funeral and burial.

This document allows you to express your wishes about your body's disposal. This information will assure your family and friends that they have done what you wanted. It will also help them to avoid sales pressures from casket, cemetery, and funeral salespersons.

Optimally, you will first complete the form. ***Then discuss it with your relatives or whomever will make your funeral arrangements.*** Give them a copy of the form, filled in by you, and keep a copy in the records that will be opened immediately after your death. (Not in a safe-deposit box.)

# Body Disposal Instructions and Discussion Guide

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden/Other Name \_\_\_\_\_

Usual Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Birth Place \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Address (if not living together) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Place \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Spouse's Death \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Place \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. How you should dispose of my body:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interred (buried), not embalmed             | <input type="checkbox"/> Interred (buried), embalmed                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cremated, not embalmed                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cremated, after embalming                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do above <i>after</i> organ/tissue donation | <input type="checkbox"/> Donate entire body (precludes organ donation) |

## 2. I wish to donate:

- My entire body for research, study, or transplant
- Any organs or tissues that can be used for transplantation, research, or study
- These specific organs or tissues:
  - Corneas (eyes)
  - Liver
  - Pancreas
  - Bone
  - Heart/lungs
  - Kidney
  - Skin
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

- I have already made arrangements for this with:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 3. I do or do not have funeral or burial insurance.

The policy is with (company) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
The policy number is \_\_\_\_\_

4. I prefer the following funeral home or funeral director:

\_\_\_\_\_

They  have or  have not been previously contracted.

5. I prefer my hair and makeup be prepared by the following individuals:

hair \_\_\_\_\_

makeup \_\_\_\_\_

funeral home                       no preference

6. I want to be dressed in: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Shroud only                       Shroud over clothing                       No preference

7. I would like to be buried with (jewelry, favorite possessions, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. I prefer a:

funeral (with the body present)                       memorial (without the body present)

open casket or  closed casket                       no formal service

9. I prefer to have any service held:

in a church/mosque/synagogue                       at the funeral home/crematorium

at the graveside only                       at home

somewhere else (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. I want the ceremony to be (choose all that apply):

religious                       military/veteran                       secular

fraternal order (type) \_\_\_\_\_

11. I want the service run by a (enter name if known):

minister \_\_\_\_\_

priest \_\_\_\_\_

rabbi \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

12. I have a preference for:

music \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

readings \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

prayers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

13. I prefer a  publicly announced or  family-only funeral or memorial service.

14. I  do or  do not want "calling hours,"  with or  without an open casket.

15. I want these people to act as pallbearers (list as many as desired, use separate sheet if necessary):

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

16. I want to be interred (buried) at (name cemetery):

\_\_\_\_\_

17. I own a  plot or a  mausoleum.

The deed for the plot/mausoleum is kept \_\_\_\_\_

It is in the name of \_\_\_\_\_

18. I  do or  do not want to be buried with anyone else.

If with someone, who? \_\_\_\_\_

19. I want a specific type of:

Casket \_\_\_\_\_

Vault \_\_\_\_\_

Grave marker \_\_\_\_\_

20. I want this written on my marker: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. I want this symbol/decoration on my marker: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

None

22. I  do or  do not want a veteran's marker.

23. Military service:

I was in the (branch of military) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

I was discharged at (place) \_\_\_\_\_

on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

My discharge papers are located \_\_\_\_\_

24. If cremated, I want this done with my ashes:

Inurned                       Buried                       Kept at home

Scattered (specify site) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. I want a specific type of:

Urn \_\_\_\_\_

Columbarium \_\_\_\_\_

26. Notify the following people of my death (list as many as desired, use separate sheet if necessary):

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

27. I prefer to have or not to have the following people at my funeral, if possible (list as many as desired, use separate sheet if necessary):

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Come to funeral       Not come to funeral

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Come to funeral       Not come to funeral

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Come to funeral       Not come to funeral

28. Other family and friends are listed in:

Address book, located \_\_\_\_\_

Rolodex, located \_\_\_\_\_

Computer listing, located \_\_\_\_\_

accessed by typing \_\_\_\_\_

29. I want mourners to send:

Flowers       Nothing

Donations to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

30. I want something special in my obituary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

31. Send copies of the obituary to the following periodicals (newspapers, professional organizations, newsletters, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

32. I have a cost limit on any of the services mentioned above:

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33. My lawyer is:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

34. My life insurance company/agent is:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

35. My will is located at: \_\_\_\_\_

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36. The executor of my estate is:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

37. The key location or lock code to access my:

Cars \_\_\_\_\_

House \_\_\_\_\_

Home safe \_\_\_\_\_

Home desk \_\_\_\_\_

Home files \_\_\_\_\_

Office safe \_\_\_\_\_

Office desk \_\_\_\_\_

Office files \_\_\_\_\_

Locker \_\_\_\_\_

Briefcase \_\_\_\_\_

Safe-deposit box \_\_\_\_\_

Other safe/locker \_\_\_\_\_

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38. The location of other valuable property (cash, jewelry, art, furs, stocks, etc.) is:

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39. Other instructions:

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**Note:** If you have financial or other essential records on your computer, either teach someone how to access them or leave detailed instructions to follow. Be sure to leave someone your passwords, PIN numbers, and other security information.

### Now What?

After you have completed this form, take the time to *discuss your preferences with those who will be entrusted with fulfilling these last wishes*. You want them to understand why you made certain choices, so they can feel more comfortable and be prepared to carry them out.

You must discuss your desire to donate organs, tissues, or your entire body. Unless your next of kin agree, it rarely matters that you have filled out an organ/tissue donor form, signed the back of your driver's license, or completed a living will—they must give their assent for donation to occur. *Talk with them*. That way, your wishes will be fulfilled.

### Educators and Professionals

This form makes a great discussion guide for classroom or patient/client use.

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