

# End of Life Essentials: A Guide at Death



## What KORU Offers

We are focused on supporting client families through the myriad after death choices around cremation, burial and ceremony. We specialize in natural and green funeral practices and encourage full participation from families in the caring for and mourning of their dead.



A different kind of funeral home.



Locally Owned  
Eco Conscious  
Led by Women



## Someone has died and I don't know where to begin...

Generally, one of our first thoughts when someone dies is that we must immediately have their body moved and ***we behave as if in a state of emergency***. Although there may be a feeling of urgency, there is no rush. This statement may come as a surprise to many, as well as learning that you do not have to immediately have their body moved. Instead, you can take time to be with your emotions, be with your dead and let the new state of being sink in. In fact, at KORU we encourage it. Once you've had a chance to be with the new reality, know that ***you have options that you are in control of***.

You can choose:

- Whether to hire a deathcare (funeral services) provider or not (it's legal in BC for families to handle all after death arrangements on their own).
- The best deathcare (funeral services) provider to work with, based on aligned values, budget and location.

There are circumstances where other parties will also have to be consulted when it comes to taking the first steps of caring for the deceased body. Reach out for guidance if that is your circumstance.

## Who to inform first

1. By law, the deceased body may not be moved until the death has been pronounced and permission has been provided by the executor or legal next of kin\*. **The exception to this is if the coroner service or police are involved.**
2. If the death was accidental (ie: motor vehicle accident) or otherwise completely unexpected, **911 must be called** and emergency responders will attend, often followed by a coroner.
3. If the death was not accidental and was expected and happens in a private residence, **do not call 911**. Instead, contact the family doctor or nurse practitioner who was familiar with the deceased person in life. They need to pronounce the death before any further action can be taken.

### \*How to determine who is the executor or legal next of kin.

If the person who died has a Will, there will be an appointed executor.

If there isn't a Will, follow the BC gov't guidelines of persons who have the right to control disposition. You can view this list on page 10 of the guide.

## After death has been pronounced

In BC deaths are pronounced by doctors, nurse practitioners (NP) and coroners. After pronouncement, you can take some time to think about where and when you would like your family member's body to be moved, or if you want to have them moved initially at all.

Family members or caregivers who have been appointed by a medical professional under the Expected Death in the Home protocol (EDITH) can forego the immediate need to have a death pronounced prior to moving the body to another location. In this case, a doctor or NP will still need to be informed so that they can produce an official pronouncement for registration of death.

Considerations after the death has been pronounced:

- Is there anyone who wasn't present at the time of death but who may want to say goodbye before anything else takes place?
- If you prefer to keep your dead at home, do you have the support and understanding of how to care for their body? Guidance can be provided in advance of a death by a funeral director, death doula, or elder in your community with that experience. In-person, paid guidance after death can only be from a funeral director. See page 8 for more information.

***When you have made decisions about the "where" and the "when", feel free to contact KORU to discuss your choices. We can set up a meeting to talk about next steps for cremation, burial and ceremony.***


***Vancouver phone 604-324-8285, North Shore phone 604-770-1471***

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*The following information guides those who choose to use KORU as their deathcare (funeral services) provider.*

### **When you initially call, you will be asked:**

- The full legal name of the deceased.
- Where did he / she / they die? Is that currently where their body is located?
- When would you want to arrange for transportation of the body?
- Before transportation occurs, do you need assistance to bathe and dress your person who has died?
- Who is the executor or legal next of kin and what is their contact information?
- As the caller, what is your name and your contact information?
- How would you like to be assisted?



***Remember, working with a deathcare or funeral service provider should be collaborative and the focus should be on you and your deceased, not on the professionals you've hired.***

***This is a guiding principle in KORU's practice.***

## Vital Statistics Information

In order to register a death with BC Vital Statistics and to complete all necessary documentation for cremation or burial, personal information needs to be collected about the deceased person.

- Legal name at birth
- Address
- Social Insurance Number
- BC Personal Health Number (care card)
- Date and place of birth (city, province and / or country)
- Parents names, including the mother's maiden name and their places of birth
- Marital status
- Spouse's full legal name (even if divorced, separated or predeceased)
- Occupation, years in occupation and industry related to it
- Executor or legal next of kin's full legal name and contact information.

**Vital statistics information can be submitted directly online on the KORU website at [www.korucremation.com/vital-statistics-form](http://www.korucremation.com/vital-statistics-form)**


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## Optional items to provide to KORU

- A recent photograph
- Clothing for the deceased
- Personal items to place with them, such as photos, letters, flowers, blankets, sea shells, anything that doesn't have a lot of plastic or metal and can be safely cremated.
- Documentation for prepaid cremation or burial or funeral services, even if it's with a different funeral provider.
- Cemetery documentation
- Copy of the valid Will
- Obituary notice (written text and photos for on-line placement)

## Questions our KORU team will ask you

- Would you like to help us bathe and dress your person who has died?
- Would you like us to cut a lock of hair to provide to your family?
- Should we provide a high resolution fingerprint copy and access to have that print engraved on memorial items?
- Should we provide postmortem DNA collection and preservation services?

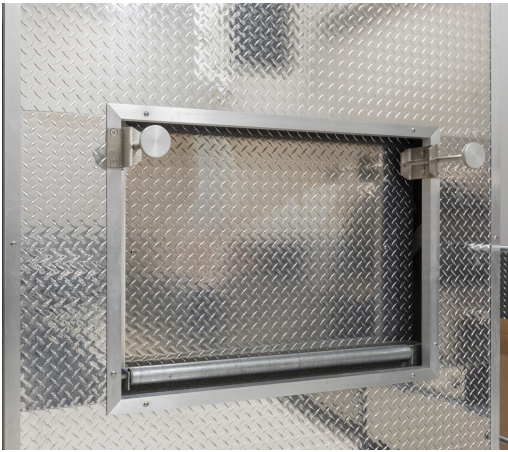


***Our KORU staff will issue and help to determine the number of original death certificates needed to begin settling estate matters. We will also provide general estate settling resources and offer referrals to estate professionals.***

# Cremation | Burial | Ceremony

All of KORU's services are centred around these three elements in their various forms. During the course of our interactions we will guide you in decisions and options to be made around these choices.

## Cremation



*In other jurisdictions, **Aquamation**, a greener, water-based form of cremation, is available. At the time of this printing, it is not a legal option in BC.*

Cremation (flame cremation) is one of only two legal forms of disposition in B.C.

Many people start with looking after all essential needs so that a cremation can take place without engaging in or incorporating any ceremony or rituals into it. In time, those important pieces can be added as families are able.

Cremation can also include a series of sacred and meaningful rituals that create immediate opportunities to mourn and celebrate the person who died. Often these ceremonies also honour the impact their death has had on the lives of those left behind.

**Witness Cremation** is a term used in the deathcare world for a service where people are present at the crematorium to bear witness to the start of the process. It is one way that ceremony and ritual can be incorporated into the cremation process.

In-ground, whole body burial and above-ground entombment are established conventional practices. If other family members have been buried or entombed in a mausoleum, it can be reassuring for the surviving members and future generations to know that their family tradition continues.

While KORU will assist with the planning of the burial, the plot will need to be purchased directly from the cemetery of your choice.

**In recent years, there's been a desire to reclaim our more ancient form of burial as more people choose green and natural burial options over cremation or conventional burial.**

## Burial



*Green or natural burial is when the body is returned to the earth in as natural a state as possible, allowing the earth to decompose the body, contributing to the renewal of the environment. There are certain practices that must be adhered to, to remain true to the principles of green and natural burial. For more information visit [www.greenburialcanada.ca](http://www.greenburialcanada.ca)*

# Ceremony



*Thoughtful, intentional ceremonies create connection and meaning and support you to be with the reality of death.*

Ceremony can take all different forms, from traditional in a church to free form in a natural outdoor setting.

Our perspective is that any activity carried out with intention can be considered ceremonial: reciting a verse from a song while lighting a candle; setting a place at the dinner table for the one who has died and having a special toast during your meal in their honour; going out into the natural world, choosing a stone or piece of wood that reminds you of a connection with your person who has died and then releasing it into a body of water; being involved in the final cleansing and dressing ritual of the one who has died.

***When you set your intention, the rest will come and it doesn't have to be over done to be meaningful.***

In our experience we have come to value the practice of guiding people to consider having different ceremony and rituals for different groups of people at different times. It is common for the needs of the immediate family and close circle of friends to be different from the wider circles of people. One way to attend to


that circumstance is by having an intimate gathering of farewell with their person who has died, followed by a larger gathering at some point afterwards to include the wider circles of people in their lives.

Whatever your culture, circumstance or challenge, we're here to help you care for, remember, mourn and celebrate your dead in a way that is fitting for you. ***You decide how much guidance you would like from KORU and we will step in to support that,*** whether your request is that KORU only be involved with looking after all immediate and necessary services when one dies, or aiding in various ceremonies.

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## Considerations for ceremony gatherings

- What is the intention of your gathering and who should be included based on that intention?
- Where will it take place? Church, public or private garden, special event venue, a private residence.
- Who will lead or carry the ceremony? A family member, friend, clergy person or a trained celebrant.
- What day and time is best? Keep in mind that weekends are popular no matter where your ceremony is. Be prepared to have a back-up date and time.
- Will it be a fully in-person gathering or a virtual service or a combination of the two?
- Will the burial or cremation be woven into the ceremony, either on a different day or on the same day?
- Who will organize and plan all of the details? KORU and their affiliated partners or family and friends?



***Celebrants or ceremonialists are trained in ceremony. They not only carry the service on the day of, but spend time meeting with you, learning about your person who has died and writing a customized ceremony that fits your vision of how to memorialize, pay tribute to and honour your dead.***

## After the Service

This is one of the times when the reality of your loved one's death can really hit hard. The busyness of the immediate after-death services has come to an end and now the everyday living begins. Don't be afraid, embarrassed or too shy to reach out for support at this time. You will need it. Whether it comes from professional grief counsellors or therapists, your network of family and friends, or a combination of these groups, it is important to realize that your life has forever changed. The wisdom and kindness of others may be your lifeline back into a new way of living.

Be gentle with yourself. Take the time you need. Pay attention to your physical needs, as they are often a reflection of our inner workings.

Our team at KORU can provide referrals to you for other professionals who we know and trust. Call or email us or take advantage of the many resources we offer on our website at [korucremation.com/resources](http://korucremation.com/resources)



## Deathcare Planning in Advance

After reading through this guide it's quite possible that you'll recognize the enormous scope of decisions that one is required to make when someone dies. For some, the thought of having to do that while the grief is raw and fresh is terribly daunting. ***To mitigate that stress, know that it is possible to plan in advance with KORU, including prepaying.***



*Prepaying with KORU is not an option for everyone, due to various factors. To find out if it is the right option for you, please call to speak with one of our staff, 604-324-8285 or 604-770-1471.*

Six easy steps to follow to prepay one's deathcare needs:

1. Call or email to get to know us and our services. 604-324-8285 or 604-770-1471  
[info@korucremation.com](mailto:info@korucremation.com)
2. Schedule a meeting: by phone, at home or at KORU's office.
3. Pick services you want and choose a payment option.
4. Sign paperwork and provide payment details.
5. Keep copies of all documents stored safely.
6. Tell the people who need to know about your plans (the executor named in the Will, immediate family members) so that they are prepared.

# Home Vigils, Home Funerals


*Deathcaring can be provided by family and friends, rather than hiring professionals. Our advice is that you follow some basic steps to be prepared so that you are not overwhelmed when the time comes.*

We can't overstate enough how important it is to plan ahead if you are considering doing the deathcare work. There are many helpful resources, from on-line guides, to books, to talking to people who have done it or have knowledge about the process. Most importantly, talk to your family and friends about your plans and enlist their help, as you will need it.

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## The must do tasks:

1. If the person dies outside of the family home you will need to organize a **private transfer permit** to be able to move the deceased body from the place of death. (apply to CPBC - Consumer Protection of BC - for the permit).
2. Once your deceased person is at home, you will need to provide physical care to the body (washing, dressing, positioning of the body) and **most importantly, you will need to keep the body and the room as cool as possible** until the burial or cremation.
3. Before the burial or cremation can take place, the person's death needs to be registered with Vital Statistics BC. This will require providing personal information about the deceased, including supplying gov't issued ID, and you must obtain the Medical Certification of Death from the doctor or nurse practitioner.
4. You will need to organize with the cemetery or crematorium the date to transfer the deceased to that location. Paperwork will need to be completed beforehand (for burial: interment authorization; for cremation: cremation authorization). **The person responsible for completing this paperwork is the legal representative of the deceased** (Executor named in a will, or, if no will, the legal next of kin. See page 10).
5. You will need to provide a burial casket or cremation casket that meets BC provincial guidelines as well as the cemetery or crematorium's requirements.
6. You will need to transfer the deceased to the crematorium or cemetery on the planned day and time (a transfer permit must be obtained for this transfer as well).
7. The cemetery or crematorium will need to be paid prior to the disposition taking place.
8. If cremation takes place, you will need to make a plan to return to the crematorium to collect the ashes.
9. Between all of the "business" of looking after things, you will want to find time to just be with your person who has died, be with your family and friends and find ways to mourn and celebrate together.



*A Hybrid home funeral / vigil may be a comfortable compromise. This means that you could hire KORU to look after transportation needs and all administrative requirements, allowing time to focus on the ceremonies and rituals that are important for you and your family.*

# Notes:

# Determining Who is the "Legal next of Kin", according to BC Law

## **THE CREMATION, INTERMENT AND FUNERAL SERVICES ACT (excerpts): CONTROL OF DISPOSITION**

5.1. Subject to this section and section 8 (3) (b) (i) [requirement for authorization before funeral service or disposition], the right of a person to control the disposition of the human remains or cremated remains vests in, and devolves on, the following persons in order of priority:

- (a) the personal representative named in the will of the deceased;
- (b) the spouse of the deceased;
- (c) an adult child of the deceased;
- (d) an adult grandchild of the deceased;
- (e) if the deceased was a minor, a person who was a legal guardian of the person of the deceased at the date of death;
- (f) a parent of the deceased;
- (g) an adult sibling of the deceased;
- (h) an adult nephew or niece of the deceased;
- (i) an adult next of kin of the deceased, determined on the basis provided by sections 89 and 90 of the Estate Administration Act;
- (j) the minister under the Employment and Assistance Act or, if the official administrator under the Estate Administration Act is administering the estate of the deceased under that Act, the official administrator;
- (k) an adult person having a personal or kinship relationship with the deceased, other than those referred to in (b) to (d) and (f) to (i).

5.2. If the person at the top of the order of priority set out in subsection (1) is unavailable or is unwilling to give instructions, the right to give instructions passes to the person who is next in priority.

5.3. If, under subsection (1), the right to control the disposition of human remains or cremated remains passes to persons of equal rank, the order of priority

- (a) is determined in accordance with an agreement between or among them, or;
- (b) in the absence of an agreement referred to in paragraph (a), begins with the eldest of the persons and descends in order of age.

5.4. A person claiming that he or she should be given the sole right to control the disposition of the human remains or cremated remains may apply to the Supreme Court for an order regarding that right.

### DEFINITION OF SPOUSE

Spouse means a person who:

- (a) is married to another person,
- (b) is united to another person by a marriage that, although not a legal marriage, is valid at common law, or
- (c) has lived and cohabited with another person in a marriage-like relationship, including a marriage-like relationship between persons of the same gender, for a period of at least 2 years immediately before the other person's death.

# The women behind KORU



## Ngaio and Emily

at Queen Elizabeth Park  
Photos by Jessica Jacobson



Ngaio Davis, founder and principal owner of KORU is a deathcare practitioner at heart, inspired by her rich Maori heritage in end of life rituals. She has been practicing for more than 20 years, licensed as both a funeral director and embalmer. She started out in the corporate world of funeral services before being called to create her own practice where she relishes the freedom to spearhead meaningful and courageous conversations in this realm.

Emily Bootle has been honing her skills and interest in the holistic realm of the deathcaring community since 2016. Along with being a licensed funeral director and embalmer, she has also completed the Douglas College End of Life Doula certification and is actively involved on the board of the Green Burial Society of Canada. In 2021 Emily joined KORU as a "sister" partner to Ngaio, a natural fit for this emerging micro deathcare practice.

## Contacting KORU

**We are available 24 / 7 when there has been a death.**

The best way to notify us is to call  
604-324-8285 or 604-770-1471.

For all other inquiries, conversations and advice,  
please email us [info@korucremation.com](mailto:info@korucremation.com) or call  
during our regular business hours Monday to Friday  
10:00 am to 5:00 pm. If we are unable to speak with  
you when you call, please leave a message and we will  
return your call in a timely manner.

Our place of practice is located at  
**131-618 East Kent Avenue South,  
Vancouver, BC V5X 0B1**

We invite people to meet with us  
at our practice and we will gladly  
make a trip to come to your  
residence or other place that is  
comfortable for you.

**KORU is New Zealand Maori word that has many meanings.....**

**REBIRTH NEW BEGINNINGS**  
**SPIRITUAL REJUVENATION PEACE**  
**HARMONY ENDLESS MOTION**  
**RETURNING TO THE POINT OF ORIGIN**  
**AWAKENING GROWTH NURTURING**

# Deathcare Choices for Cremation & Burial

Selection	Decisions That Need to be Made				Status	
<b>Disposition</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cremation</b> When the deceased person's body is reduced to small bone fragments through intense heat + flame. (Aquamation not yet available in BC).	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventional Burial / Entombment</b> When the deceased person's body is buried in the ground or entombed in a casket and / or vault at a cemetery.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Green Burial</b> Environmentally conscious burial in a biodegradable shroud or casket. No embalming.	<input type="checkbox"/> Decided <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Info		
<b>If Cremation</b>	<b>Cemetery Interment</b>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>In-ground</b> When the urn is buried in the ground. An urn vault may be required.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Above-ground</b> When the urn is placed in a niche (columbarium) or mausoleum crypt.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sea Burial</b> When the ashes are formed into an artificial reef and deployed in the ocean.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Scattering</b> When the ashes are scattered on land or in the water.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Keep Urn Home</b> Consider that at some point the final disposition for the ashes will need to be decided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Decided <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Info
<b>Service Types</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Witness Cremation:</b> Attending at the crematorium to spend time with the deceased, seeing the casket placed, and watching the start of the cremation. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Celebration of Life:</b> A contemporary, custom service, before or after one dies with the participation of family and friends, often secular. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Funeral:</b> Deceased is present in a closed or open casket, at church or other service venue, secular or religious. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Memorial:</b> A service without the deceased present, ashes may be present, at church or other service venue, secular or religious. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Graveside:</b> A service at the cemetery graveside for full body burial or interment of ashes, secular or religious. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Viewing Service:</b> Private or everyone welcome time to be with and pay respects to deceased person in a private home, at funeral home, in church or other service venue. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Home Vigil / Funeral:</b> When the family gathers in a private space with the deceased body present either for a brief time or multiple days. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hybrid or Virtual:</b> Live streaming and/or recording any of the above services or creating an unique digital service to share with others remotely. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Receptions:</b> Refreshments are served separately from or as a part of a service, private or everyone welcome, in a family home, event venue or restaurant.				<input type="checkbox"/> Decided <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Info	
<b>Physical Body Care</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Essential</b> Natural, non-invasive	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Complete Personal Care</b> Natural care with bathing, and dressing	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>By Family</b> By family in a private home setting.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Family Assisted</b> With assistance by trained KORU staff, in KORU's facility or in private home.	Other Options <input type="checkbox"/> Lock of Hair Cuttings <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Fingerprint <input type="checkbox"/> DNA Memorials	<input type="checkbox"/> Decided <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Info
<b>Additional Service Options</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers <input type="checkbox"/> Live, potted plants <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Candles <input type="checkbox"/> Photo(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Memory Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorabilia <input type="checkbox"/> Video or Slideshow <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Music, live or recorded <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrant - professional ceremonialist.	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Obituary <input type="checkbox"/> Online Obituary (complimentary) <input type="checkbox"/> Family or Friend as MC	
<b>Merchandise Caskets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cremation Casket</b> Purchased or homemade combustible casket or coffin.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Burial Casket</b> Purchased or homemade casket or coffin. Made from solid wood, metal, wood composite or biodegradable materials. Carrying handles.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Shroud</b> Fabric enclosure made with sewen in carrying handles, if used in place of a burial casket.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Casket Vault</b> Outer container that surrounds casket. Made from concrete, fiberglass, metal or plastic. May be required.	<input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery Markers or Headstones Upright Granite Flat Granite Bronze on Granite or Concrete Base	<input type="checkbox"/> Decided <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Info
<b>Cremation Urns</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Biodegradable <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry Urns	<input type="checkbox"/> Brass <input type="checkbox"/> Family Provided / Made	<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze <input type="checkbox"/> Scattering	<input type="checkbox"/> Handcrafted <input type="checkbox"/> Wood	<input type="checkbox"/> Urn Vault (may be required)	<input type="checkbox"/> Decided <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Info
<b>Things to Bring</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Government ID <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Effects <input type="checkbox"/> Vital Statistics Info	<input type="checkbox"/> Photograph <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Pay Documents	<input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery Documents		

Our hope is that this document will be a guide to help you with the myriad decisions that need to be made. Our KORU staff are here to work with you at your pace and in a manner that is best for you. We can be flexible in how we communicate with you, whether it is in-person, by phone, by email, video conference call or a combination of these things.

KORU is passionate about sharing our commitment to leaving a lighter footprint in the practice of our work with our clients. We focus on sourcing sustainable or Canadian made products. We contribute to clean energy projects through Bullfrog Power and Tree Canada.



KORU Cremation | Burial | Ceremony  
 131-618 East Kent Avenue South, Vancouver, BC V5X 0B1