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Customers rate local funeral homes

by Connie Thompson
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SEATTLE - Results of a [local survey](http://www.checkbook.org/komo/enter.cfm) (<http://www.checkbook.org/komo/enter.cfm>) show the funeral home you choose can have a huge impact on both the price you pay and the quality of service you get.

The survey, by [checkbook.org](http://www.checkbook.org/komo/enter.cfm) (<http://www.checkbook.org/komo/enter.cfm>), includes funeral home ratings from thousands of local funeral home customers. Some of those customers would clearly have gone with a different funeral home if they could do it all over again.

The sad truth is - most people wait until the time of death to start making funeral or memorial plans. But when you're stressed, distressed and grieving, you're not in the best state of mind for making crucial decisions about funeral homes, burial plans, caskets, urns and extra services.

"Funeral homes, look, they perform important services, but they're also geared toward turning profit," said Kevin Brasler, Executive Editor at [checkbook.org](http://www.checkbook.org).

Brasler's team surveyed thousands of local consumers for an in-depth guide to help you navigate the emotional decisions so many have to make under pressure.

"The sales people at funeral homes, they're used to being in this environment. The people who are trying to make these decisions are not," Brasler added.

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Brasler says whether you want cremation or a traditional burial you can save hundreds, even thousands of dollars by doing some research and planning ahead. The Checkbook report on funeral services in the Puget Sound region includes important factors everyone should know about notifications, documents, prepaid arrangements, cosmetology and dressing, planning the service and the dramatic differences in costs from one funeral home to the next.

A price check for common funeral services produced mind-boggling differences for the same service. For example, the cost of transferring remains to the funeral home: A low of \$150 to a high of \$695. For funeral supervision at church: \$250 at one funeral home, to a high of \$1,600 at another. The cost of the least expensive oak casket: A low of \$995 to a high of \$4,400.

Checkbook also surveyed local customers about their experiences at dozens of local funeral homes and found varying degrees of satisfaction in the quality of the service provided. Customers rated funeral homes on doing the service properly, pleasantness of staff, up-front communication about cost, and overall performance.

Of the 41 funeral homes in the survey, only 9 received Checkbook's top ratings for both quality and price.

Checkbook's customer ratings are a non-profit, subscriber-based service. As a courtesy to KOMO viewers, the [full Funeral Home Report and Ratings](http://www.checkbook.org/komo/enter.cfm) (<http://www.checkbook.org/komo/enter.cfm>) will be accessible until July 4th.