FUNERAL PLANNING GUIDE
FOR HSC FUNERAL COORDINATORS

Details to discuss with family:
Funeral Coordinators: Deborah Luscomb 902.403.7590 & Dawn Carson 902.488.6601

1. Is it their wish for the body to remain at home prior to the funeral service, at the HSC, or another location?

2. Will the body be in repose in the Main Shrine Room for any time before the funeral ceremony? Please note, if so, a rota for changing of ice packs will be necessary.

3. Will a funeral home be involved and what is the extent of their involvement?
   - Lester Atkinson of Serenity, an independent funeral director who can provide services at a much lower price, 902.435.4883.
   - Sunrise Park Cemetery on Prospect Road, Wayne Hatcher, 902.880.4944.
   - It is not necessary in the HRM to use a funeral home to transport a body; it can be done in a private car.
   - The advantage of using a funeral director are the services they can provide: transporting the body; working with the crematorium or cemetery; providing a casket; and doing all the paperwork. The disadvantage is the cost. Minimal services can be provided, however, which can ease the stress on the family.

4. What kind of funeral service is preferred: Shin Kham, Sukhavati, Sadhana of Mahamudra?

5. Will there be a military presence? Kasung contact?

6. Who do they want for the preceptor? Has this person been contacted?

7. Are there other friends who will volunteer for some of the necessary roles: coordinator, reception, set-up, greeters, ushers, choppon, take-down, etc.?

8. What is the proposed day and time for the service?

9. How many family members are expected to be at the service? (They are usually seated together at the right of the Shrine).

10. Will there be many non-sangha attending? (They will need an explanation of the service prior to its beginning, and will probably need chairs).

11. Two photos will be needed, one to be burned during the service and one to be placed next to the Shrine for 49 days.

12. Favourite food and drink could be placed on the shrine during the ceremony (entirely optional).

13. Who will be offering eulogies? How many? How long?
14. Does the family want all offerings from family and friends to be done during the ceremony, or some to be done during the reception?

15. What is the family’s wish regarding flowers?

16. Is there any particular music the family would like played at particular times?

17. Who would they like to remove the casket from the Shrine Room? Can they provide six pall bearers? (It helps if it is on a frame with rollers, which the funeral director can provide).

18. Will some of the family members be in a “receiving line” and, if so, where?

19. Will there be a reception following the service and, if so, will the reception be catered (the cost is generally figured on a per person basis, depending on what foods are chosen); pot-lucked; or prepared at another location and picked up? If using a caterer, someone should be designated to work with the caterer, the family, and the Shambhala Centre.

20. Will alcohol be served at the reception? HSC holds a liquor license that covers funerals, as well as some other events.

21. Will there be a guest book? An “order of service”, or program handed out? Will envelopes be provided for memorial donations to an organization the family chooses?

22. Potential expenses may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS Funeral Director: transport of body, death certificate filing, cremation</td>
<td>$2,500 - 10,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial plot, opening &amp; closing</td>
<td>$2,000 - 3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental of Halifax Shambhala Centre</td>
<td>$500 - 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral Coordinator</td>
<td>$500 – 1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceptor</td>
<td>$100 - 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choppon – shrine keeper</td>
<td>$50 - 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/V (audio-visual tech)</td>
<td>$100 - 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair Rental</td>
<td>$150 - 675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>$100 - 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set-up/Clean-up Crew</td>
<td>$200 - 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception (food &amp; drink)</td>
<td>$0 – 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>$80 - 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest book</td>
<td>$10 - 45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note:

- Prices vary significantly depending on the variables of time, elaboration, and means, to name a few. When needed, fundraising can be done to cover expenses.

- Additional expenses could be incurred if using optional services such as drafting of directives, sitting vigil and post-mortem body care.
Coordinator's Role

Funeral Coordinators: Deborah Luscomb 902.403.7590 & Dawn Carson 902.488.6601

1. Check with the Shambhala Centre regarding space availability for the service and for sitting with the body prior to the service if this is requested. Check ice pack supply. Put ‘Body in Repose’ sign on shrine room door. Is air conditioner needed?

2. Let the Shambhala Centre know the type of service.

3. Ask the Centre to send out a special announcement about the time of the service and sitting with the body (if at home, provide the location and a number to call to arrange a time).

4. Design and print program if necessary.

5. Find a chopon (hopefully someone familiar with funeral services) and someone to manage the sound system (that person will need to know if recorded music is to be played and when).

6. Meet with the preceptor, in person or by phone, to discuss the order of the service, who will be making the offerings, if special recorded music is to be played, if s/he will be meeting with the family prior to the service, and if s/he will need anything special during the service.

7. Organize a set-up and take-down crew for the Shrine Room.

8. Work with the funeral director (if used) re: delivery time of deceased and anticipated time to pick up the body following the service. Locate flag and/or cover for casket, if requested. Secure six pall bearers.

9. Map out area in Shrine Room for casket, general seating, and family/guest seating.

10. Have reserve signs for guest seats.

11. Have an abundance of tissue boxes available in and around shrine room.

12. Make sure there are greeters at the front door of the HSC and ushers at the door of the Shrine Room.

13. Make sure there is a room available upstairs with chairs and a table for family/special guests to meet prior to the service, and find a host for those guests.

14. Have the host provide a beverage service for guests.

15. If burial or cremation is to take place, find out the time and location and make sure an announcement is made to that effect before the service ends.

16. Set up a table in the reception area or hallway for the guest book, if provided, and memorial donations.

17. Organize the reception line following the service after discussion with the family.

18. Find someone to take charge of the reception and supervise the distribution and clean-up of food and drinks, including working with the caterer.
19. Arrange for rental of extra chairs, dishes, tables, table cloths, if necessary.

20. Work with the reception coordinator to make sure the reception area and kitchen are left clean and appropriately set up.

**Funeral Coordinators:**

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