

## How Funeral Directors Can Support Vermont Families Who Wish to Direct or Participate in Care for Their Own Dead

*“The most important support funeral directors can provide home funeral families is the compassionate understanding that this is something families feel called to do for their loved one and themselves, their friends, and community. Home funeral families by and large are looking for simplicity, self-reliance, personal responsibility, and a shared, intimate experience that only they can conceive of and conduct.”*

—Lee Webster, NH Funeral Resources and Education  
*“How Funeral Directors Can Support Home Funeral Families”*

Vermont families have the legal right to custody and control of their own dead. Whether the death was anticipated or unanticipated, once time and cause of death are established, the family may choose to care for and transport the body, file the death certificate, arrange for disposition, and conduct any other aspect of after-death care. Families choosing to conduct a home funeral may do so without assistance from a funeral director or may prefer to have a funeral director handle some but not all of these tasks.

### How can funeral directors assist families who choose home funerals?

Some Vermont families may choose to take on responsibilities for their loved ones while opting to partner with funeral directors for specific services. Assistance with filing paperwork and transportation allow them to relax and tend to the time between the death and disposition either in the home or other facility. Your help with these items and other advice may be offered a la carte.

*Please see also: “How Funeral Directors Can Support Home Funeral Families” for 12 categories of services and goods funeral homes can offer to support home funeral families.*

### Legal Authority of Families

In Vermont, the legislative authority for families to act as unpaid funeral services practitioners is found in [18 V.S.A. § 5207](#). Certificate furnished family; burial-transit permit

*“Within 24 hours after death, the death certificate shall be made available upon request to the family of the deceased, if any, or the undertaker or person who has charge of the body. The certificate shall be filed with the person issuing the burial-transit permit obtained by the person who has charge of the body before such dead body shall be buried, entombed, or removed from the town. When the death certificate is so filed, the officer or person shall immediately issue a burial-transit permit under legal restrictions and safeguards.”*

### Information to Provide Families

- Vermont Funeral Resources & Education [www.vermontfuneral.org](http://www.vermontfuneral.org)
- National End-of-Life Doula Alliance [www.nedalliance.org](http://www.nedalliance.org)
- Funeral Consumers Alliance [www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org)