

How are cremated remains sent to Still Waters for burial at sea?

If you contact Still Waters before you receiving the cremated remains, we can coordinate the crematory or funeral director's transportation directly to us. If you have cremated remains, simply insert your check and our Authorization Form inside the outer shipping container, and mail to Still Waters via U.S. Registered mail. While shipping is not within our control, this method of shipment is reliable. You can have an authorization form sent to you by mail, or go to our website and go to the forms section to download the form. We also have a shipping label that can be downloaded from the site.

Why do families choose burial at sea?

Burial at sea dates back thousands of years. In these times with scarcity and high cost of cemetery space, many more are turning to the more natural burial at sea. This alternative to traditional burial is more affordable. The eternal cycles of the ocean's water, the conservation of the land space as well as the shortage of cemetery plots are all reasons cited for selecting sea scattering.

Why can't I perform a sea burial myself?

Burial at sea can be performed legally by anyone who can sail the seas and comply with the regulations concerning ocean burials. There are certain environmental requirements that must be met to satisfy the law as well as Coast Guard requirements concerning boating. Some families value their ability to fulfill this final wish of a loved one.

Still Waters understands that information involving the details of sea burial may be difficult to obtain, so we have included much of it on this site. Of course, we are available to answer specific questions you may have, even if you decide to perform a sea burial yourself.

For the sake of the environment, for your safety and out of respect for the law, do not perform a sea burial without being certain you comply with local and national regulations.

My funeral director needs information about burial at sea -- right now!!

The scattering of ashes is requested by a growing number of families every day. Ask your funeral director to call us, right now. We're available to answer questions. If you or your funeral director wishes answers to burial at sea questions, we can provide them. Simply call us at 360 736-3403.

Aren't there environmental laws and regulations governing Burial at Sea?

Burial at Sea is governed by a myriad of state and federal laws. Penalties for violating these laws are oppressive. Nothing can be placed in the ocean without proper reporting to the U.S. Government. When you employ Still Waters, you are assured of full compliance with all applicable regulations in the area. Government reporting is included with all Burial at Still Waters.

What sites are available for Burial At Sea of cremated remains?

Still Waters provides the scattering service on the beautiful inland Puget Sound waters of Washington state.

What questions should I ask a burial at sea company?

Virtually anyone with a boat can perform a burial at sea. Because of this, you must make certain that the people you trust with this service are competent, reputable and experienced. Try to answer these questions.

- Is the boat for your group carefully inspected by the Coast Guard and certified to safely carry the number of people in your party?
- Does the company carry insurance?
- Will the burial be performed within 30 days? Or will the company hold the remains for up to a year when they have many burials to perform?
- Are those involved in burial at sea licensed Coast Guard Masters?
- Are all your questions answered to your satisfaction?

Still Waters has met these requirements. In these times when personal service is often difficult to find, we trust you will find our service to your satisfaction.

Why do Burial at Sea fees vary so greatly?

Still Waters' fees reflect our cost to conduct the desired service. Since we may be asked to perform burials at different locations, we must adjust pricing to conform to the traveling distance. Fuel and crew costs vary with location.

Where charter services are desired, the boat is scheduled depending on the size of the group and the planned voyage. Federal law dictates many of these requirements. Larger groups require additional crewmembers. In areas with busy seasonal business or in vacation areas, summer costs are higher, as vessel availability decreases. Most large cities require very high docking charges, which also are reflected in fees.

As in any profession, an insured, reputable, experienced company, maintains its equipment better and provides a high quality service. Beware of the uninsured or unlicensed boat owners.

We wish to accompany you on your voyage. Is this possible?

Yes, and many families join Still Waters for a charter voyage that they can plan and direct. We assist, as you desire. We can even arrange for seaside dining, or on board refreshments.

We do not wish to attend your sea journey. Can this be arranged?

Most families do not attend the burial at sea service for a number of reasons. Either they do not wish to make the journey to the location, or they simply wish a private service performed by a solitary sea captain. This is the most economical service, with fees beginning at \$195 depending the location selected.

How soon will our service be performed?

Virtually all cremated remains are buried at sea within thirty days of their arrival at Still Waters. You will receive a memorial certification indicating the exact date the service was performed. On rare occasions, generally only if continued high seas prevent our voyage, this 30-day schedule cannot be met. Where a specific date or time period is important to you, we can work to fulfill your wishes. Call us.

Can Still Waters plan a service with our funeral director?

Many funeral professionals seek Still Waters to perform maritime funeral. We maintain close relationships with the nation's leading funeral providers who value the advantages of using a professional firm for sea burial. Emailing us at stillwaters@localaccess.com or phoning us at 360 736-3403 makes it simple for your representative to make arrangements with us. Have your funeral professional email us, or just call, and we will coordinate all the details.

What are the disadvantages associated with burial at sea?

Cremation and burial at sea are irreversible. There is no way to recover cremated remains that have been scattered at sea. Cremation too, is irreversible. One way many of us come to terms with grief is through establishing and visiting memorials. Traditionally, we erect headstones and visit graves of departed loved ones. Some may miss this comfort when a close family member is buried at sea, as there is no personal memorial to visit. Others see the ocean itself as a memorial. Visits can be made to the seashore or even to the exact spot of sea burial for memorial services. There are religious or ethnic restrictions on cremation and ocean scattering too, and you should consult an authority in this area if you have any questions. This site contains some information about several religions' customs; you should refer to these pages as a starting point of your research if religious requirements are important to you.

I do not wish to be cremated. Can I still be buried at sea?

We do not perform this service; there are many reasons why we do not.

Burial at sea of human remains that are not cremated is often a lengthy and expensive process. Regulations require burials of this nature to be made at a specific depth in the sea. In many locations, a long journey is required to satisfy this requirement. This ocean voyage often requires a larger vessel, and may be uncomfortable for those who are less experienced at sea travel. The casket must be specially prepared to insure that it quickly descends to the ocean floor and remains there. It must also be secured according to strict regulations.

Does Still Waters video tape the services it performs?

Weddings and birthdays are joyous celebrations that can be relived time and time again through photos. Still Waters respects the dignity and privacy of the funeral service and believes video taping these events does not support this belief .

We will, upon your request, capture the moment of the scattering, with a photograph.

How can I learn more about Still Waters?

Our Web site contains information about burial at sea and the Still Waters organization. Spend some time reading the site. You can email us at stillwaters@localaccess.com or make a phone call - 360 520-3643.

Why do you use a post office box for the shipping destination of cremated remains?

Most cremated remains are shipped to Still Waters via registered mail. The use of United States Postal Service's registered mail is by far the most secure form of transportation. It is used to ship currency, coins, precious metals and gems. The United States Government protects the shipment. It is only proper that every precaution is taken to protect the transportation of human remains. The transportation of them at a guarded government facility assures they are safe, and protected.

How do you guarantee that the cremated remains are actually placed in the ocean?

Certainly when choosing a firm to perform an unaccompanied service, credibility is important. This brings rise to your question as to how a client is guaranteed that the service was actually performed when they were not there to witness the actual scattering.

The following assurances should be offered by a firm, as are provided by Still Waters.

1. The service should be performed by a licensed Coast Guard Master. He has earned his license as a sea captain through rigorous testing and through logged voyages. His log and license are federal documents, which he must preserve and which are governed by federal law. He would not put them at risk.
2. A scattering performed in the ocean to EPA regulations is reported to the Environmental Protection Agency. The report includes specific information about the deceased. It would be a crime to falsify these documents. Burials performed in bays or inlets, where permitted by law, may not require this reporting.
3. The reputation of the firm and its success is based solely on its credibility. No reputable firm, with its considerable investments in its business, advertising, trust building and repeat funeral home clients would risk it all by being dishonest. Actually, a reputable firm will have standards and practices in effect to insure that no false claims can be made against them.
4. As anyone with a love of boating knows, owners of boats spend much time on them. Quite simply, it is easier to perform the burial at sea than not to do it and attempt to weave the web of deception necessary to falsify the event.

It is understandable, however, that many families, in final preparations, want assurances that the service is properly performed. To some, this assurance comes only through their own personal witnessing of the event.

For those, a charter service is easily provided. When an individual wishes to witness the burial alone or with a small group, the service can be performed conveniently and quite affordably.

Rather than live with doubts or questions of the validity of a service performed, the extra cost involved in witnessing the service personally is a small price to pay. We will work with you to make this possible if it is important to you.

Please call us if you have any other specific questions. We are glad to discuss this with you further.

Three Easy Steps to Sea Scattering

1. Email Still Waters at stillwaters@localaccess.com or phone us at 360 736-3403, if you wish to discuss your plans. Information about charter service options is best answered with a telephone call.
2. Complete the "Authorization for Scattering At Sea" form, which you can print from this site by clicking on the link above, or you can have mailed to you.
3. Insert the authorization form and your check or money order to "Still Waters" for \$195 in the outer cremated remains shipping container. Your telephone counselor can accept credit card payment or discuss any other requests you may have.

Mail via U.S. Registered Mail, from a post office to:

Still Waters
P.O. Box 173
Centralia, WA 98531

Your Burial At Sea will be performed within 30 days and certificate documenting the event forwarded to you by return mail.

Are services available on weekends?

Yes. Weekends are the most convenient time for most people to gather together for the burial at sea ceremony. Services are also available at other times for the convenience and desires of the survivors.

Can I visit the scattering site later?

Yes, knowing the exact coordinates of the scattering site, we can take you to that spot for any memorial you have in mind. The cost of this special re-visit service is \$350 and can accommodate up to 30 people.

Can we set an appointment for the scattering service?

Yes. Appointments are usually made to gather attendees at the landing for subsequent departure. Usually arriving 15 minutes before scheduled departure is sufficient.

Can you accommodate special requests for scattering?

Yes, we will attempt to satisfy any special requests provided they are not in violation of governing state or federal statutes.

How are the cremains (ashes) dispersed from the boat into the ocean?

The cremains are transferred from the urn (container) you bring them in, to a medium-sized wicker basket lined with biodegradable paper. The cremains are then covered with flower petals. (Customarily, some of the flowers brought by the attendees.) The Captain lowers the basket with voluntary assistance from family members, into the ocean. The cremains sink, and the flowers float to provide marker of interment. This procedure prevents “blow-back” of the ashes back aboard the boat and guests. Family and friends can participate in “lowering the cremains to the deep” by assisting in letting go of the rope.

How far do we go offshore?

State and Federal laws restrict where ash dispersals are not allowed. The “three-mile limit” is our guideline. Therefore, all ash dispersals will be done beyond the “three-mile limit” offshore. It usually takes about 20 minutes to reach that area.

How is payment made and when?

Payment is by personal check, money order or cashier’s check. We do not take credit cards and discourage sending cash.

How large is the boat, and how many people can go along?

Our boats are 65 feet long, ocean-going, very stable, twin-engines, seating for all, and can comfortably accommodate up to 149 passengers. The U.S. Coast Guard for safety and sea worthiness inspects them annually.

How long is the cruise?

Usually 1 to 1 1/2 hours, depending on the “service to be conducted” arrangements made prior to departure.

How will I know when and where the unattended scattering took place?

It is our policy to scatter remains as soon as possible after receipt, usually within the week. You will receive a memorial certificate indicating the date and exact location of scattering.

How will I know when the dispersal has taken place and where?

Shortly after returning, we complete the Certificate of Disposition with the date and exact coordinates of disposition, which is mailed to you thereafter. With the coordinates, we can revisit the site and disperse flowers, if you request.

How will I know where dispersal took place?

We will provide you the exact Global Positioning Coordinates where the deceased was interred. You can “revisit” the exact site if you wish. We offer a revisit service for \$350.

I've had the cremated remains for some time. What can I do now?

Many people choose to keep the cremated remains of a loved one at home for a while (maybe even years) before feeling the need to make a decision about their ultimate placement. This is very common. Call us for assistance.

Is sending the cremains by US Postal Service a proven and reliable method?

Yes, it's been proven to be the best, fastest, and most reliable method. Some other delivery providers will not accept cremains due to liability restrictions.

Is the cruise safe for children?

Yes, high railings around the boat, and non-skid decks help keep children safe. All children under 90 pounds are provided with life vests for the trip.

Is there room to walk around the boat?

Yes, all 65 feet of rail and deck is available to passengers.

What about providing flowers?

Family and friends customarily bring “cut flowers” for tossing into the ocean immediately after the cremains are lowered. Wreaths are also sometimes used, but the wreath must be completely biodegradable. Styrofoam wreaths are not approved for placing in the ocean.

What type of clothing/shoes/hat/glasses should we wear?

Wear warm clothes, preferable wind-proof, non-skid shoes, a head cover and sunglasses.

Will I get seasick?

If you are concerned about becoming sea sick, we recommend considering taking a dose of anti-motion sickness medication as the waves do cause a little bit of rocking.

Would our family and guests be the only ones on the boat at the time of scattering?

The boat is exclusively yours for the cruise and memorial service. Family and friends may conduct whatever type of memorial service they wish, and the Captain will perform the scattering ceremony.