



Aftercare Arrangements

Whether you are planning well in advance for the loss of your beloved pet, or have suddenly and unexpectedly had to say goodbye, a decision about aftercare can sometimes be overlooked. Although it is never an easy decision to make, determining aftercare arrangements ahead of time can actually provide peace of mind and eliminate one more stressor when that difficult day arrives. Be sure to check with your local veterinary staff, as they may be the best resource for services available in your area. In addition, your veterinarian may be able to hold your pet's body (in a properly temperature controlled space) if you need a day or two to explore your options after your pet has passed.

Home Burial

Many pet parents can recall the past during which it was commonplace to bury pets in one's own backyard. This may still be an option in certain areas, but quite often it is either inappropriate or illegal. Check with local veterinarians or a municipal government agency for the restrictions in your area.

If home burial is legal and appropriate, it is important to use a well-constructed box or special holder (similar to a casket for people) to protect the remains. In addition, the grave should be a minimum of three feet deep to help reduce the chance of a wild animal unearthing the burial site.

Cemetery Burial

An official pet cemetery is located on "dedicated land" or "deeded land" meaning no matter who owns the land in the future; the property will always be a cemetery. There are hundreds of official pet cemeteries in the U.S. The International Association of Pet Cemeteries and Crematories can be reached at 1-800-952-5541 or by clicking here <http://www.iaopc.com/pet-owners>.

Individual Pet Cremation

If you decide you would like only your pet's remains ("ashes") returned to you, it is important to inform your veterinarian or the crematorium staff members of your wishes. Individual cremation is offered by most veterinarians and pet cemeteries. If the veterinarian does not have on-site facilities, they often partner with crematories. Most will arrange to pick-up your pet's body at the veterinary hospital or your home. The remains can then be returned to the veterinary hospital or delivered to your home address. Check with local veterinary staff members or the International Association of Pet Cemeteries and Crematories for more detailed information. Again, please make your wishes known ahead of time so there is no guesswork left up to the employees of either the veterinary hospital or the crematory.

Communal Cremation

Cremating several pets together – at the same time is common practice. This is an option for pet parents who do not wish to have their pets ashes returned. This service is often considerably less expensive when compared to individual cremation. It is important to specify whether you want communal or individual cremation.

Public Services

Local County Animal Control Services or perhaps the area Humane Society may offer cremation services at no or low cost. Again, your local veterinary staff will likely be a helpful resource for all of the above options.