

# FUNERAL SERVICES FOR THE CALGARY HINDU COMMUNITY



**VIRTUAL HEALTH SEMINAR # 60**  
**January 23, 2024**

Jit Davda, Funeral Committee

# What will be covered today?

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- Funeral committee objectives
- Funeral homes and services
- What to do when a family member passes away?
- Funeral service pricing
- References to Source of information
- Q & A



# Sequence of Events

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## Our Focus Today



- Wills & Estate Planning
- Family wishes

- Death
- Funeral planning
- Ceremony

- Notifications to agencies
- Executor responsibilities



# Funeral Committee - Volunteers



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## □ Current Committee Volunteers

- Jit Davda - 403 402 9110 or [davdaj@gmail.com](mailto:davdaj@gmail.com)
- Dilip Patel - 403.618.9772 or [deelipspatel@hotmail.com](mailto:deelipspatel@hotmail.com)
- Manoj Raythatha - 403 651 8122 or [manojraythatha@shaw.ca](mailto:manojraythatha@shaw.ca)
- Chandrakant Lad - 587 899 2725 or [chandra.lad@gmail.com](mailto:chandra.lad@gmail.com)
- Manu Makwana - 403-462-7070 or [manu.makwana@shaw.ca](mailto:manu.makwana@shaw.ca)
- Rupesh Patel - 403.767.5214 or [rups\\_51@yahoo.com](mailto:rups_51@yahoo.com)
- Bhaskar Thankey - 403 242 9787 or [bthankey@hotmail.com](mailto:bthankey@hotmail.com)



# On behalf of the Funeral Committee...

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- We are pleased to present you the information on Funeral services for the Hindu community in Calgary
- The information is based on our experience and understanding of our traditions and culture
- We fully understand there are variations based on different faiths, beliefs and traditions
- Funeral committee does not get involved in any financial transactions – can provide guidance
- We are all volunteers for the community and DO NOT charge any fees for our services



# Funeral Committee – Our Objective

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- Assist families with Funeral services keeping in mind:
  - ▣ Funeral is a very private matter
  - ▣ Funeral committee volunteer is only engaged if requested
  - ▣ Families can contact the vendor directly – just mention that you would like to use the “Hindu Community” arrangements and pricing



# Funeral Committee – How we can help

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- Take the initial call from the family of the deceased, gather information and make the call to the Funeral home (for meeting, transfer of body etc.)
- Meet with family (if required) to go through the Funeral procedure and norms (Virtually or in-person)
- Discuss options of Private VS Public service
- Discuss options of where to have the service
- Arrange for a priest
- Provide list of Samagri required for ceremony
- Assist with announcement through community email



# Accepting Death

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- ❑ Birth and death are counter parts of life
- ❑ Most families have a hard time talking about death, funeral etc.
- ❑ Death of a family member is a deeply emotional and challenging experience
- ❑ Ceremonies connected with death – Cremation and Last rites are very important in the Hindu traditions to provide peace to departed soul for reincarnation
- ❑ As per Hindu tradition – 16<sup>th</sup> Sanskar or sacrament in life is the last sacrament known as “Antim Sanskar”

SHIFT from Grieving to **“Celebration of Life”**





# Funeral services in Calgary

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- Number of Funeral service vendors have increased dramatically with the aging population
- Discussions with various vendors have resulted in making arrangements & pricing with three vendors
  - ▣ Heritage Funeral Services (4 locations)
  - ▣ Country Hills Crematorium
  - ▣ Choice memorial cremation & funeral services (for smaller funerals)



# Heritage Funeral Services

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- Four locations -
  - ▣ Calgary Crematorium & Funeral Services  
3219 – 4<sup>th</sup> Street N.W. – Seating capacity 170
  - ▣ McInnis & Holloway Chapel of the Bells  
2720 Centre Street North – Seating capacity 280
  - ▣ McInnis & Holloway Eastside Memorial Chapel  
5188 Memorial Drive N.E. – Seating capacity 250
  - ▣ Deerfoot South – McInnis & Holloway Capacity 300  
12281 40 St S.E.

NOTE: To get our pricing and packages, arrangements **MUST** be made through the Calgary Crematorium location at 3219 – 4<sup>th</sup> Street N.W. regardless of where the services are being held (Tel: 403.299.0111)



# Country Hills Crematorium



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- ❑ 18,000 sq ft facility built in mid 2016
- ❑ Located at 11995 – 16<sup>th</sup> Street N.E. Tel: 403.274.0576
- ❑ Two large halls - capacity of 350 & 300
- ❑ Two Cremation facilities to allow for two different funerals to happen concurrently
- ❑ First Crematorium & funeral centre co-owned by South Asian partners and Pierson family



# Choice Memorial Cremation & Funeral Service

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- Location – Unit #105 - 4715 - 13 St N.E.
- Small funeral home with capacity of around 40 people



# Our funeral package - Services

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- Professional services including:
  - ▣ Transportation of deceased from within city limits
  - ▣ Embalming and sanitation
  - ▣ Preparation for dressing & viewing (with / without family assistance)
  - ▣ Legal paperwork, assistance with newspaper announcements
  - ▣ Obituary on Funeral Home website
  - ▣ Cremation and witnessing of cremation
  - ▣ Family visitations, if required prior to the service



# Our funeral package - cont'd

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- ▣ Memorial book
- ▣ Urn including storage of urn for up to a year
- ▣ Casket
- ▣ Use of Audio/Visual equipment
- ▣ Flower petals
- ▣ Funeral Directors Proof of Death Certificates – required for banks, CPP, OAS and other agencies (10+ copies)
- ▣ Alberta Registry - One official Death certificate
- ▣ Package of documents required for completion by family members after the funeral
- ▣ Paperwork for Customs if the urn is being sent with family member or shipped to India



# Additional services for a fee (\$)

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- ❑ Funeral coach to Residence with Casket
- ❑ Services at larger facility
- ❑ Services on Statutory holidays
- ❑ Family Limousine (10 passenger)
- ❑ Service Folders (Picture of deceased & Obituary)
- ❑ Transportation of deceased – outside city limits
- ❑ Video production on DVD
- ❑ Virtual (Zoom) streaming facility

10% Discount available on additional services



# Alberta Vital Statistics

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All deaths that occur in Alberta must be registered with Alberta Statistics. Following information is reqd:

- Deceased – Name, Date of birth, Date of death, place of death, place of birth
- Father's Name and place of birth
- Mother's Name and place of birth
- Mother's maiden name (for females)





# What to do when a death occurs?

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- Do not panic, have courage, help is available
- Call one of the Funeral committee members if you want their help or call one of the three vendors (available 24 hours) with the following info:
  - ▣ Legal full name of the deceased
  - ▣ Time of death and location of deceased
  - ▣ Name of Doctor in charge
  - ▣ Authorize transfer of body to the funeral home
  - ▣ Arrange a face to face meeting with the Funeral Director



# Family Decisions



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- ❑ Involve Funeral committee volunteer or not
- ❑ Private funeral or Public funeral
- ❑ Public Memorial service and private funeral
- ❑ Out of town family members/friends coming
- ❑ Announcement in newspapers, community email
- ❑ Family member with authority to work with Funeral committee volunteer and attend meeting with Funeral Director
- ❑ Last rites at Funeral home (98%) or at residence
- ❑ Casket open or close during public parikrama



# Before meeting with the Funeral Director

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- ❑ Get family consensus on when the funeral should take place
- ❑ Gather all the information that will be required for the meeting
- ❑ Funeral committee (if involved) can arrange for the meeting, make provisional booking for the funeral, arrange for a priest, assist with announcement through community emails
- ❑ Cremation permit takes about 48 business hours



# Info required for meeting with Funeral Director

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Designated family member with authority to make decisions should be present (Next of kin/Executor)

- Take the following documents/information of the deceased:
  - ▣ Passport, Drivers License, Alberta health care card, Social Insurance number
  - ▣ Full name, Date of Birth, Name of spouse, Birth place, Address, phone #
  - ▣ Full name of deceased's father & mother and place of birth
  - ▣ Credit card for payment



# Before the day of the Funeral

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- ❑ Priest is lined up
- ❑ For public funerals, announcements in newspaper(s) and/or community email and funeral home website
- ❑ Samagri for the ceremony is ready
- ❑ Family members lined up for Eulogy, Tributes, Emcee, Presentations and who will be witnessing the cremation
- ❑ Clothing for the deceased given to the Funeral home and who if any helping with the dressing
- ❑ Printing of programs (optional), Photo of deceased
- ❑ Arrange for any special CD or bhajan singers





# Day of the Funeral

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- Bathing and dressing – by Funeral home staff with / without family members (Could be the day before)
  - Family ceremony 30 minutes before the public comes (doors closed for public)
  - Ceremony – Gita slokas by priest, Eulogy, tributes, Shanti Path, Public viewing and parikrama (\*), cremation including havan (limited number at back), announcements for bhajans etc.
  - Family line up as the public departs
  - Shiv Pooja (Uthamnu), if desired for family
- (\* ) For larger gatherings, consider doing the Parikrama, when the door opens for the public





# Uthamnu – Shiv Pooja

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- Why do we do it?
  - ▣ Lord Shiva is the god of destruction and regeneration and we pray to Lord Shiva to accept the Atma (Soul) and grant it eternal peace
- Items required for this ceremony
  - ▣ Photo of Lord Shiva
  - ▣ Photo of the deceased
  - ▣ Diya
- Typically done at the end of the funeral by immediate family members only



# What are the costs involved?

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- Funeral service costs has become like buying a car – what options do we want?
- We will hear prices quoted from \$4K to \$20K – all depends on what we want
- Funeral committee has negotiated packages with three vendors that should meet requirements of most families – flexibilities available to alter
- Funeral service vendors will always try and up sale on their services – it is their business and they want to be profitable





# Cost of Funeral Services

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- Calgary Crematorium – 3219 – 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW starting at **\$5,633 + GST**
- McInnis & Holloway (Chapel of the Bells or East Side Memorial & Deerfoot south) starting at **\$6,558 + GST**  
GST
- Country Hills Crematorium – starting at **\$6,335 + GST**
- Choice Memorial cremations & funeral services starting at **\$3,930 + GST**

Note: Prices are subject to change with higher inflation rates



# Cost of Funeral Services - Children

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- For still born there is no service fee – every thing is on cost basis (with increase in costs to bury, families are choosing to cremate)
- Heritage funeral services (all locations) – Costs are range from 20% to 40% of regular costs
- Country Hills Crematorium – Starting at **\$635 + GST**
- Choice Memorial cremations & funeral services - costs are discounted by 50%

Note: Prices are subject to change with higher inflation rates



# Other Information



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- Distribution of ashes
  - ▣ In Alberta, officially there is no designated place to distribute the ashes in spite of several attempts
- Donating organs and tissues  
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Pages/OTDRHome.aspx>
- Body Donation (for research)  
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/bodydonation/>
- Dying with Dignity – Medical assisted in dying (MAID)  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page13497.aspx>



# Pre-planning and Prepayment Options

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- ❑ Pre-planning reduces the burden on your family of planning a funeral during a difficult time
- ❑ Prepayment option – Available with Funeral homes
- ❑ You pay based on today's prices – protects you from inflation and price changes
- ❑ Pre-select your casket, urn etc. based on your wishes
- ❑ Funds are invested and stay in a trust account
- ❑ If the death occurs outside of country family members can get a refund
- ❑ If you move to a different location, you can transfer the pre-arrangements to a different funeral home



# Government Programs

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- The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) death benefit is a one-time, lump-sum payment to the estate on behalf of a deceased CPP contributor – up to \$2,500
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-death-benefit.html>
- Financial assistance - Eligibility is based on the financial resources available in the estate of the deceased
  - <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/IS/4862.html>
- Low income Seniors subsidy (up to \$1,200)
  - <http://www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca/documents/SNA-Information-Booklet.pdf>



# Priest

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- Dakshina to Priest should be given at the end of the ceremony
- Same Priest can perform 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> day and 12 month rituals if required – to be discussed directly with the Priest
- Priest is not required at time of death but is recommended for the funeral service
- Samagri list varies slightly depending on Priest



# Priests on our list

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- Acharya Vinod Sodiyaal – 403.397.6478
- Pandit Mahend Singh – Tel: 403.248.4317
- Acharya Rahul Dev – Tel: 403.903.5221
- Pandit Harishchandra Dabral – Tel: 403.613.9642
- Hindu Temple (Priest) – 403.291.2551



# Sources

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- Sonali Jewellers (Jogia family) provides FREE gold, silver and bronze metal pieces
- O K General Foods, and other Indian grocery stores for Pooja Samagri material
- Our New Indo-Canadian Centre at Bay 8, 1916 – 30th Ave N.E. is available for memorial services/bhajans and can be arranged through <https://newicc.org/>





# After the Funeral



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- Funeral home will provide a package that will have a list and forms to complete for various agencies (CRA, OAS, CPP, Insurance etc.)
- Funeral Directors Proof of Death Certificates (10+)
- Urn with ashes can be kept at funeral home for up to a year at no cost

## Additional information:

- Steps to take following a death
  - ▣ <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/benefits/family/death.html>
- Estate Executor's responsibilities
  - ▣ <https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/estate-planning/estate-representative.html#toc1>



# Samagri from Grocery store

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- ❑ Agarbati (incense) 1 pkt
- ❑ Ghee 200 gms bottle
- ❑ Havan samagri 1 box
- ❑ Chandan 1 box
- ❑ Kapoor 1 pkt
- ❑ Sopari 5 pcs
- ❑ Rose water 1 small bottle
- ❑ Coconut 5 pcs
- ❑ Honey 100 gms
- ❑ Rice 50 gms
- ❑ Black sesame seeds 50 gms
- ❑ Nagarvel Paan 10
- ❑ Sticks from mango tree 5 pcs
- ❑ Ganga jaal 1 pkt



# Items to take from home

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- Photo of the deceased with a garland
- Diyas (3), Matches
- Gold, silver, bronze metal pieces
- 5 Ladoos (prepared by mixing wheat flour, water, jaggary (gur) and ghee)
- Tulsi leaves (3)



# Items kept at the funeral home

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- Mounted photo of Bhagwan Shiv
- Steel utensils – plates, bowls, glasses, spoons
- Diya stands
- Havan kund or Aluminium tray for Havan
- CDs of Gayatri Mantra – Families can bring their own as well on a USB stick



# Q & A



Jit Davda, Funeral Committee