

New City Jewish Center Funeral Guidelines

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The following are a set of guidelines that may be brought with you to the funeral home, in order to assure that Jewish funerals reflect the dignity and sanctity of Jewish tradition according maximum honor to the deceased.

In the unfortunate event of the passing of a love one:

1. Contact the rabbis at the NCJC synagogue office BEFORE making funeral arrangements to coordinate an appropriate time and place for the funeral and to discuss any unique issues (e.g., autopsy and organ donation).

- Call 845-638-9600 and make sure you speak with someone.
- If no one answers the phone, please leave a message.
- If the death occurs after the close of the business day, on a holiday or Shabbat please call the office and dial the emergency contact number mentioned on the recording.
- One of the rabbis or members of the professional staff will be in touch with you as soon as possible.
- Please wait to hear back from someone before making final arrangements with the funeral home so as to ensure the availability of one of the rabbis.

2. Contact the funeral home to make arrangements.

- New City Jewish Center has a working relationship with Hellman Memorial Chapel in Spring Valley. They are familiar with NCJC's guidelines for a funeral according to *halacha* (Jewish Law) and can be reached at 845-356-8600. Nevertheless, the rabbis are able to work with other funeral homes if you so choose.

Here are the essential elements of a Jewish funeral as required by the rabbis of New City Jewish Center:

- Shomrim (guards)

The deceased should not be left alone before burial. The funeral home can arrange for a Shomer (someone who watches over the body and recites from the Book of Psalms) to be present with the deceased until the funeral service. Arrangements for a Shomer should be made as soon as possible.

- Taharah (ritual washing of the body)

Just as a newborn child is immediately washed and enters this world clean and pure, so one departing this world is cleansed and made pure through the ritual called Taharah - purification.

- Tachrichim (funeral shroud)

These simple handmade white cotton or linen shrouds symbolize purity, simplicity and dignity.

- Wooden casket

“For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19), is the guiding principle in the selection of caskets. The sages did not consider expense a barometer of honor to the dead, therefore, a simple wooden casket accords the greatest dignity to the deceased.

IMPORTANT: Some funeral homes may offer services such as above ground burial, cremation and embalming. Such services are not in keeping with Jewish practice and may compromise the involvement of our rabbis in the funeral service.

We urge you to contact one of our rabbis if you have any questions regarding these guidelines or to learn more about Jewish ritual funeral rites.