

Planning a Funeral Procession: A Step-by-Step Guide for Families

A funeral procession is a time-honored tradition that allows loved ones to accompany the deceased to their final resting place. It is a public display of respect, unity, and support. While the emotions of the day can feel overwhelming, knowing what to expect and having a clear plan can help the journey feel meaningful and dignified.

Step 1: Coordinate with Your Funeral Director

- Plan the route from the service location to the cemetery or crematorium.
- Obtain necessary permits if required by local authorities.
- Arrange police or escort vehicles if needed.
- Provide identification flags or decals for vehicles.
- Communicate rules, speed, and formation to family members.

Step 2: Select the Procession Vehicles

- Lead Car / Pilot Car to guide the procession.
- Hearse carrying the casket or urn.
- Immediate family vehicles following the hearse.
- Extended family and friends in personal vehicles.

Step 3: Communicate with All Attendees

- Include procession details in the obituary.
- Provide printed route cards with destination address.
- Make a clear announcement before departure.
- Ensure vehicles display flags and turn on headlights/hazard lights.

Step 4: Understand Local Traffic Laws and Safety

- Follow the lead vehicle or police escort instructions.
- Maintain safe and steady speed.
- Keep headlights and hazard lights on.
- Avoid distractions and stay focused.
- Confirm local procession laws with your funeral director or DMV.

Step 5: Add Personal Tributes to the Journey

- Organize a walking procession if culturally appropriate.
- Arrange a motorcycle escort for enthusiasts.
- Consider a horse-drawn carriage for tradition.
- Include meaningful music or scenic routes.

Step 6: Arrive with Dignity at the Final Destination

- Lead vehicle and hearse enter first.
- Immediate family parks near the site.
- Guests are directed to organized parking.
- Remain in vehicles until directed.
- Gather for final prayers or committal service.