

# Burial Service Planning Worksheet

## Natural Burial New Mexico

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### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this worksheet is to aid in organizing your thoughts and help you plan a burial at La Puerta Natural Burial Ground for your loved one. This tool is meant to be very flexible and can be modified however you wish to fit your unique needs for remembering and celebrating your person.

### Things that are coordinated with a funeral home (if applicable):

- Call the funeral home for the initial pickup of the body - Note that you legally have 24 hours from the time of death before you have to call a funeral home
- Inform the funeral home that you will be doing a natural burial at La Puerta Natural Burial Ground, and embalming is not allowed
- Provide funeral director with our contact information so we can coordinate with them directly
- Provide necessary information to file the Death Certificate (must be done by Next of Kin or Designated Funeral Agent - the funeral home will require documentation of the designation of a funeral agent. Note that a POA is not the same thing as a designated funeral agent)
- Set Burial Time & Date (coordinate with us) \_\_\_\_\_
- Provide funeral home with appropriate, biodegradable burial container
  - If you purchase a burial container with Natural Burial New Mexico and it is stored with us, we will work with the funeral home to get the container to them
  - If you are storing the container yourself, you will be responsible for providing the container to the funeral home
  - If the container is purchased with the funeral home, make sure the burial container is made of only natural, biodegradable materials and has a minimum of 6 handles for lowering per La Puerta Natural Burial Ground Rules and Regulations

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- Additional funeral services, if applicable

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- Transportation the day of burial.

- If the funeral home is located in Bernalillo County or Valencia County, we will typically provide the transportation from the funeral home to the burial ground on behalf of the family, if they request it.

If you choose to have a funeral service at a place of worship prior to the burial, the funeral home will advise on what that process will look like. It is legal in the state of New Mexico to have a viewing of an unembalmed body for up to 30 minutes in a funeral establishment, but internal funeral home policies may differ.

## Planning a Burial Service

All graveside services are unique to the individual and the family and friends. It is important to know that there isn't a right or wrong way to lay someone in their final resting place. It is best to do what is most meaningful and comfortable in the moment and remember what made that person special to you. Also note that burial services are not required for a natural burial at La Puerta. It is the choice of the family and friends if they wish to have a planned service, or if they would prefer to have a simple burial without ceremony.

## Before Burial

- If desired, hire a celebrant or clergy, or identify who will be leading services:

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- Identify 4-6 Pallbearers

Note: NBNM will always have at least one person available to act as a pallbearer if needed. If there are not enough pallbearers to lower safely, we will safely and gently lower using machinery

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed to be a pallbearer? Yes No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed to be a pallbearer? Yes No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed to be a pallbearer? Yes No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed to be a pallbearer? Yes No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed to be a pallbearer? Yes No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed to be a pallbearer? Yes No

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- Inform attendees of the following information:
    - Burial time and date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Directions to Burial Ground:  
<https://www.naturalburialnewmexico.com/directions.html>
    - Inform attendees to bring or be aware of the following:
      - Bring drinking water
      - We recommend bringing sunscreen/sunhat
      - Wear comfortable, closed toed shoes
      - There are no trash cans on premises, so we ask that everyone take any trash from the burial services with them (pack it in, pack it out)
      - The closest gas station is 20 miles away, so make sure you have some gas in the tank

## Day of Burial

NOTE: The actual burial service start time can be fluid to allow people who are attending time to greet one another, use the restroom, prepare themselves, prepare flowers or pictures, and so on.

## General Burial Process

Below is a general, step by step description of the burial process. At any step you may choose to add or incorporate whatever service or ceremony you wish.

### Step 1 - Final Ride Cart

The body will be placed on the final ride cart from the transport vehicle by NBNM staff and/or pallbearers. We typically do this under the polebarn (open, shaded area 40'x20'). At this time, flowers or other sentimental items may be placed with the body/burial container and services or ceremonies can take place. The family can also take this time to have a private moment with their loved one prior to a ceremony.

NOTES ON HOW YOU WANT THIS STEP TO LOOK:

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**Step 2 - Procession to Gazebo or Graveside**

The pallbearers will pull the final ride cart and decedent to either the gazebo (small, circular covered space with a built in bench) or the graveside for a ceremony or service. NBNM staff will help guide the pallbearers or clergy to the desired location. If someone at the ceremony has limited mobility, please notify the NBNM staff and accommodations for a vehicle following the procession will be arranged.

NOTES ON HOW YOU WANT THIS STEP TO LOOK:

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**Step 3 - Lowering into the grave**

The person leading the burial services will notify NBNM staff when they are ready to lower the body into the grave. The pallbearers will move the body from the final ride cart next to the grave at the NBNM staff's direction. Rope will be attached onto the burial container handles and NBNM staff will instruct the pallbearers on lifting and lowering the body into the grave.

NOTES ON HOW YOU WANT THIS STEP TO LOOK:

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**Step 4 - Closing the grave**

Once the lowering is done and ceremony is completed, the NBNM staff will proceed to close the grave with machinery. If family and/or friends wish to place the initial earth on the body, or if they wish to close the entire grave with shovels, they are welcome to do so. PLEASE NOTE: Closing the grave by hand can be dangerous if it is a hot day. Please consider this in your decision and ensure that water is available for those closing the grave if you decide to go this route.

NOTES ON HOW YOU WANT THIS STEP TO LOOK:

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## After the Burial

Once the grave is completely closed, it will be nicely mounded and native grass seed will be scattered on top of the grave to help restore native plant life. You may decorate the grave with natural stone, or a native plant(s) may be planted as a marker. Only the area of the burial mound is allowed to be decorated. If there are decorations or plants placed outside of the plot area, they may be removed. Additionally, if there are decorations that are not made of natural stone or native plants (e.g. plastic, glass, metal), they may be removed per La Puerta Natural Burial Ground's Rules and Regulations.

NOTES ON HOW YOU WANT THIS STEP TO LOOK:

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### Ceremony Ideas:

Prayers

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Eulogy

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Songs/Music

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Storytelling

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Other forms of celebration

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