



Seven questions to ask your veterinarian about cremation and body care

Carolyn Naun, DVM, CHPV

It can be hard to think about the day you say goodbye to your loyal and beloved companion. But when that time inevitably comes, you'll be grateful if you have already done some thinking about the arrangements you want. Planning ahead will give you more options and save you the stress of making decisions when you're actively grieving. To make sure your wishes are honored, here are several things you might want to find out from your veterinarian.

1. **What choices do you have for aftercare?** The most common options are to do a home burial or have your loved one cremated. With cremation, you will need to decide whether you would like to have the ashes saved and returned to you or not. You don't need to make a final decision until the time comes, but it is a good idea to start thinking about it and discussing it with family now. Other less typical arrangements (burial in a pet cemetery or preservation) will require advanced planning.
2. **If you don't want the ashes saved and returned to you, what will happen to them?** Crematories have different ways of handling this, and if it matters to you, you should ask.
3. **Will your pet be cremated alone?** If you're having the ashes saved and returned to you, each pet's remains should be cremated separately. The terminology varies depending on the provider, but sometimes this is accomplished by physical separation within the same chamber, and sometimes it means each pet will be cremated by themselves in a single chamber. Again, if this matters to you, then you should ask what your options are instead of assuming it will be one way or another.
4. **How will your loved one be returned to you?** Most cremation services will provide a basic vessel like a decorative tin or a wooden box. If you have your own urn or want something custom engraved, what is the process for arranging that?
5. **Will you get other mementos as well,** such as a fur clipping or a paw print? These can usually be arranged but you should ask if it's important for you to have them.
6. **How soon will your pet be cremated,** and how will their remains be cared for in the meantime? If you'd rather not know the details, you don't need to ask. It's up to you.
7. **How long will you need to wait for the return of your loved one's ashes?** Will you need to call or will someone reach out to you? Where will you need to go to collect them?

At Arms of Aloha, we know how much these details matter. If you decide to work with us, rest assured your pet will be handled with the utmost respect and care from the moment we take them until the moment we bring their ashes home. If you don't want their ashes back, they will be scattered offshore in Kaneohe Bay. If you do want to keep their ashes, our price includes solo cremation - that means your loved one does not share a chamber with another pet, ever. We also include an attractive and simple mahogany urn, a clay paw print, and a fur clipping (the paw print and fur are given to you even if you choose not to have ashes back). We personally take your loved one to the crematory, wrapped lovingly in soft blankets, and will hand deliver their ashes to you within ten days in most cases.

Do you have questions for us? Email info@armsofaloha.com or call 808-435-3006.