

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) about the PSJC Simple Jewish Funeral Plan

Q: I am relatively young and healthy. Is it really necessary for me to think about funeral arrangements? What does this plan have to do with me?

A: May you live and be healthy (if not young) for many years to come! It's never easy to think of ourselves as dying "some day." Even so, like provisions for life insurance and legal wills, funeral preplanning can help us to live out the rest of our lives—however long they may be—with greater peace of mind. Unfortunately, we never know when our time of need will arise, and a sudden tragedy is that much more complicated and painful (not to mention more costly) when our specific wishes are not communicated to our survivors in advance.

Q: Do you recommend prepayment for funeral arrangements?

A: In general, while funeral **preplanning** is always recommended, **prepayment** may not be the best option for everyone. Depending on how you maintain your finances, there may be other sensible alternatives. A representative of our Burial Committee is available to discuss the respective merits of prepayment vs. designation of a particular bank account from which funds may be accessed at the time of death. Write to hevra.kadisha@psjc.org, or call the PSJC office at 718-768-1453 for further information.

Q: Can my other relatives who are not PSJC members participate in this plan?

A: Our cooperating funeral home will honor the general provisions of this plan for any relative referred through PSJC. However, given our limited volunteer resources at this time, we can only commit ourselves to providing *sh'mirah* (vigil-keeping) and *taharah* (cleansing and dressing) for PSJC members and their parents, spouses / life partners, siblings, and/or children. For all others, *taharah* will be performed by an outside *hevra kadisha*, and there will be an additional charge for a *shomer* (vigil-keeper) engaged through the funeral home.

Q: What if death occurs outside of New York City?

A: Transfer of a body back to New York for local burial is best facilitated by our local funeral director. Engaging the services of an out-of-town funeral director is generally much more complicated and costly. Those who indicate their wishes to participate in the PSJC funeral plan will be given information in preparation for out-of-town contingencies.

Q: What if I don't have a cemetery plot?

A: PSJC members in good standing may purchase one or more burial plots through PSJC at well below market rates. You can indicate your interest in doing so on the funeral plan form, write to cemetery@psjc.org, or call the PSJC office. A Burial Committee representative will contact you with further instructions.

Q: What else should I be thinking about in relation to funeral planning?

A: Our Rabbi and Burial Committee strongly encourage all PSJC members to designate one or more family members and/or friends as health care proxies, and to discuss their wishes concerning end-of-life medical technologies and organ and tissue donation with these proxies. As much as possible should be put in writing, to avoid painful misunderstandings later. All PSJC members who fill out the funeral plan form will be offered follow-up assistance in this process.

Q: What if I don't know whether I will spend the rest of my life in this community?

A: The wishes you indicate now are not legally binding, whether you relocate or not. However, PSJC will be better able to support you and your loved ones if we know what your wishes are during the time you are with us. In any case, our Rabbi and your fellow congregants are here to help you live your life fully and meaningfully—in times of celebration as well as consolation—for however long you are part of our community.