

AN INVITATION TO FUNERAL PRICING ABUSE

If we were to die Monday through Friday — with one funeral a day — and two weeks off for the mortician's vacation, the following chart shows the number of funeral homes that would be needed in each state, compared to the actual number. There are undoubtedly some funeral homes that can handle more than one funeral a day, which reduces the "needed" number accordingly and probably explains the figures for California, Hawaii, and Nevada.

Certainly in rural areas with sparse population, a funeral home does not expect the dying business to be a full-time one, and more establishments will be needed to cover the geographic area than the number generated by a simple death-rate formula. In most other states, however, the number of funeral homes far exceeds that which can be reasonably supported by the death-rate. (In Kansas, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Vermont, there are almost four times the needed mortuaries; in Iowa there are five times too many!)

Why are so many funeral homes still in business? Because of high mark-ups that consumers pay — either willingly or because they just don't know what their other options are. It's a situation that invites pricing abuse!

How Many Funeral Homes Needed

State	Deaths Annually	Existing Funeral Homes	Needed Number of Funerals
AK	3,728	20	15
AL	48,038	407	192
AZ	46,762	144	187
AR	28,916	279	116
CA	234,012	806	936
CO	31,465	182	126
CT	28,692	261	115
DC	4,672	27	19
DE	7,706	65	31

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FL	173,791	831	695
GA	71,263	572	285
HI	9,617	21	38
ID	11,429	71	46
IL	99,931	1027	400
IN	56,743	575	227
IA	27,745	397	111
KS	24,502	313	98
KY	41,983	459	168
LA	40,667	274	163
ME	12,750	110	51
MD	43,325	270	173
MA	52,583	519	210
MI	88,021	651	352
MN	38,972	368	156
MS	28,965	345	116
MO	55,281	498	221
MT	8,827	70	35
NE	15,171	215	61
NV	19,623	52	78
NH	10,201	90	41
NJ	69,495	660	278
NM	15,931	73	64
NY	146,432	1579	586
NC	78,773	607	315
ND	5,944	68	24
OH	108,711	1086	435
OK	36,529	325	146

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OR	31,890	165	128
PA	124,596	1585	498
RI	9,579	79	38
SC	41,614	386	166
SD	7,100	92	28
TN	59,578	414	238
TX	166,527	1128	666
UT	14,776	84	59
VT	5,380	56	22
VA	59,032	490	236
WA	48,146	179	193
WV	21,275	255	85
WI	47,308	496	189
WY	4,438	30	18

Number of funeral homes needed=1 funeral/day, 5 days/wk, 50 wks/yr

Death data from 2012. FH data from 2013 □

