## 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.

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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 Fun |
|---|---|---|---|
| **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**