

PRE-NEED FUNERAL CONTRACTS

Trap

Tara was initially relieved she had completed a pre-need funeral contract. It covered travel arrangements from Florida, the funeral and interment at a cemetery in New York. Later she realized it covered neither the cost of the casket nor the local funeral home services. She decided to cancel the contract, but the funeral home refused to give her a full refund. A bad situation got worse when the funeral home later changed hands, and Tara discovered the new owner knew nothing about her contract or the previously agreed upon refund.

Tips

Many people see pre-paid funeral arrangements as part of estate planning. Ensure your family knows about plans made and where to find the needed documents. Here are some steps to take before making “pre-need” payments:

- Carefully compare cost and services of more than one pre-need provider before making a decision.
- Make sure details of the funeral services, as well as merchandise (e.g., casket, vault, etc.), are included in the contract.
- Determine if there is a penalty for cancelling should you change your mind. Ask about the refund policy on both merchandise and services.
- Ensure the contract clearly explains what happens to the interest income on pre-paid funds placed in a trust account.
- Check if you are protected should the company go out of business. What if you re-locate or die while away from home or overseas?
- Check if the plan is transferrable. Some pre-paid funeral plans are transferrable, but often at an added cost to the family.

**For more information, to obtain a Business Information Report
OR to file a complaint, contact
Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600
(Boca/Delray 888-852-7362 toll free)
www.pbcgov/consumer**