



## What Happens to the Urn at Home? Planning for the Future of a Loved One's Ashes

In the quiet corners of many homes across Canada, urns rest on mantels, bookshelves, or in private home memorials, carefully placed by grieving family members as a tribute to someone they love and miss. For many, keeping the urn of a loved one at home brings comfort, connection, and a sense of closeness. But what happens when the person who made that choice, the “keeper of the urn” passes away?

It's a sensitive topic, but an important one.

As time moves forward and generations shift, families are often left uncertain about what to do with cremated remains. If no plan has been made, urns can be misplaced, forgotten, or even discarded during estate clean-outs. This is not only heartbreaking, it's avoidable.

### Why You Need a Plan

Cremation is now the choice of over 70% of Canadians. While the options for final disposition are more flexible than ever before, flexibility without a plan can become a burden for the next of kin.

When no instructions are left, loved ones are forced to guess what “Mom would have wanted” or feel guilt over decisions they weren't prepared to make.

If you're currently keeping an urn at home, ask yourself:

- Who knows it's there?
- Have I written down what should be done with it in the future?
- Will the next generation feel confident making a decision?

## Creating a Plan for the Urn's Future

You have options and it's not too late to document your wishes. Here are a few proactive steps you can take:

### 1. Talk to Your Family

Open the conversation. Let your loved ones know where the urn is kept, why you chose to keep it at home, and what you hope will happen to it in the future.

### 2. Put It in Writing

Whether it's in your will, an estate plan, or a letter of instruction, writing down your wishes ensures clarity. State whether you want the urn interred, scattered, placed in a niche, or passed on to a specific person.

### 3. Choose a Permanent Resting Place

Cemeteries like Beechwood offer permanent options for cremated remains; including burial plots, columbarium niches, and memorial gardens. These are dignified and secure places where family and future generations can visit.

### 4. Register with a Cemetery in Advance

You can make arrangements at any time to have the urn placed at Beechwood; even years after the passing. Many families find peace of mind knowing there is a permanent plan in place.

### 5. Consider a Commemorative Plaque or Monument

Even if you continue to keep the urn at home, you can honour your loved one publicly. A plaque or name inscription at a cemetery provides a place of remembrance for others.

## The Risk of Doing Nothing

Too often, cremated remains are left unattended; stored away in closets, basements, or drawers, eventually forgotten or passed between family members with no clear plan. In some cases, they are unintentionally forfeited to estate executors, city services, or even discarded during property clean-outs. Without documented wishes, urns can be lost, mishandled, or disposed of without the dignity your loved one deserves.

Every life deserves a respectful resting place. And every family deserves the peace of knowing their loved one's legacy has been preserved with care, intention, and dignity.

## We Can Help

If you have an urn at home and are unsure what to do next, speak with our team. We can walk you through your options, help you record your wishes, or assist in transferring cremated remains to a final resting place.

Beechwood Cemetery also offers a dignified communal option through our Shared Memories Lot, where urns can be interred with care and respect. Learn more here. <https://www.beechwoodottawa.ca/en/communities/cultural-communities/shared-memories-lot-0>

**Beechwood Cemetery — the National Cemetery of Canada — is here to help ensure no Canadian is forgotten.**

## Planning for the Future: Urns Kept at Home – Worksheet

Many families choose to keep the urns of their loved ones at home for comfort and remembrance. However, as time passes, it becomes essential to ensure these cremated remains are documented, cared for, and provided a dignified, long-term plan. This worksheet will help you organize the important details of each urn currently in your care, including identity, documentation, location, and future intentions for inurnment.

Use this sheet to guide family discussions, estate planning, or coordination with your cemetery of choice.

Name of Deceased : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth : \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death : \_\_\_\_\_

Cremation Certificate Available? (Y/N)

Current Location of Urn : \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Urn (Material, Colour, Size) : \_\_\_\_\_

Planned or Desired Final Resting Place : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Deceased : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth : \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death : \_\_\_\_\_

Cremation Certificate Available? (Y/N)

Current Location of Urn : \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Urn (Material, Colour, Size) : \_\_\_\_\_

Planned or Desired Final Resting Place : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Deceased : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth : \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death : \_\_\_\_\_

Cremation Certificate Available? (Y/N)

Current Location of Urn : \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Urn (Material, Colour, Size) : \_\_\_\_\_

Planned or Desired Final Resting Place : \_\_\_\_\_

If you are ready to formalize these plans or require assistance, the Beechwood Family Services Team is here to help.