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16-CFR Part 453  
The Federal Trade Commission  
Room E-169  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20580

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**Subject: Funerals**

The cost of a funeral is something about which most people probably have no idea. They do not want to think about death or anything connected with it, even though it's inevitable for everyone. In a time of great grief, sometimes unexpected and untimely, and therefore more shocking, they can be very vulnerable to sales pitches from funeral directors and perhaps spend the rest of their own lives paying it off.

Funerals should be discussed in popular newspapers, magazines and TV shows in a calm, reasonable, non-sensational, informational manner, not necessarily as exposes. People know how to shop for shoes or cars or milk and orange juice. They can also put off some purchases, like clothing or TV sets if the money isn't available. They don't know how to shop for funerals and when the time comes, it can't be put off. This is as important as a cure for baldness, a collection of recipes or the sex lives of celebrities.

If there are alternatives to funerals like memorial services later, and/or graveside services, people may not want to think about it. They should be thinking about it before it's necessary.

There is not much publicity given to the fact that many funeral homes are owned by a conglomerate (or is there more than one?). The public should know this as part of everyday information.

Why can't we bring the question of funeral details and costs out into daylight and open air, so it's as much a matter of general knowledge as the cost of a daily paper or a gallon of gasoline. People wouldn't be "taken" so easily if they were knowledgeable on the subject.

Incidentally, your request for letters was discussed in my local paper on Monday, August 9. This wasn't a lot of time to get a letter written within your deadline.

Sincerely,

*Doris H. Carlton*  
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