

Common mistakes when choosing a pet crematory

A written price list, a question about extras and a comparison of several crematories in writing are the simplest ways to avoid surprises. This guide lists common mistakes and questions to ask.

Updated October 20, 2026

Choosing a pet crematory is hard when you have just lost a pet. You can take your time and ask questions. This guide lists common mistakes and the questions that help you avoid them. The facts on this site come from public registers, OpenStreetMap and provider websites. The providers have not yet reviewed them, so check each provider page.

Not getting a written price list. A starting price on a website may cover only one option. Collection from your home, an urn or keepsake, and a witnessed cremation may each cost extra. Ask each crematory for its full written price list before you decide. Fees change, so ask for the current figures.

Assuming all crematories offer the same services. Private cremation, communal cremation and equine cremation are separate services. A provider may offer only some of them. Private cremation means your pet is the only animal in the chamber and the ashes come back to you. Communal cremation means several pets are cremated together and no ashes return. Ask each provider what it offers and make sure it matches what you need.

Forgetting to ask about collection. Some providers collect your pet from home or from your veterinary practice. Some charge a separate fee. Ask about the collection area and about out-of-hours collection, which providers usually price by quote. Add collection to the total when you compare providers.

Overlooking the licence record. In Great Britain, pet crematoria that handle animal by-products need approval from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). The listing shows the approval number when the register lists one. In the US, Canada and Australia, the rules sit with states, provinces or councils. This site does not hold those rules. Ask the crematory which licences it holds and what they cover.

Confusing a membership with a licence. A listing may show that a provider is an IAOPCC or APPCC member. The provider states this, or the association lists it. It is not a government licence or approval. Ask the provider what the membership means to them.

Choosing one crematory without comparing. Two or three quotes show you the range. Ask each provider for the same items in writing and compare them line by line. The lowest headline fee may be for communal cremation with no ashes returned. You may need private cremation with ashes and a keepsake.

Not asking about the return of ashes. In a private cremation the ashes come back to you. A standard container is often a scatter tube. A casket, a keepsake or a paw print may cost extra. Ask what the standard container is and what the alternatives cost.

Questions to ask every crematory. Ask these questions and write down the answers. What type of cremation do you offer? What does the fee include? What is not included? Can I attend or watch? Do you collect from home or from my vet? What licences do you hold? How do you return the ashes? Clear written answers make it easier to compare providers.

This guide is not veterinary, legal or financial advice. Ask a qualified professional if you need advice.

Frequently asked questions

What is a common mistake when choosing a pet crematory?

Deciding before you have the full written price list. A starting fee may cover only one option. Collection, an urn or a witnessed cremation may be separate. Fees change, so check the provider page.

Should I visit the crematory before I choose?

That is a personal choice. Some owners find comfort in seeing the facility and meeting the team. Others prefer not to. If visiting matters to you, call ahead and ask whether they welcome visitors.

Sources

[Pet cremation cost estimator](https://petcremation.fyi/tools/pet-cremation-cost-estimator) — <https://petcremation.fyi/tools/pet-cremation-cost-estimator>

[APHA approved animal by-product plants \(Great Britain\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-by-product-operating-plants-approved-premises) — <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-by-product-operating-plants-approved-premises>