A Consumer's Guide to Burial Vaults

Burial Vaults – What are they and do I need one?

Generally, a casket is considered the final resting bed of a loved one. However, caskets alone are not designed to support the weight of the surrounding soil. Burial vaults are the industry standard and accepted means of enclosing the casketed remains of a loved one within a grave. The end goal of the outer burial container (vault) is to provide the casket with superior, long-lasting protection against subsoil elements and the weight of heavy cemetery maintenance equipment. Burial vaults are manufactured of several materials including: bronze, copper, concrete, plastic lined concrete, steel, aluminum and plastic. A burial vault should offer you peace of mind by protecting the casket against water and weight damage. We believe that our product's precise engineering and elegant designs offer unparalleled security and dignity in interring your loved one.

Why Do I Need A Burial Vault?

In most areas of the United States and Canada, a cemetery requires the casket to be enclosed within a burial vault or grave liner. There are vast differences in these two products. By definition a burial vault is a lined and sealed unit that is specifically engineered to support the weight of the earth above the grave as well as the heavy equipment that passes over it. A grave liner provides no protection from the intrusion of outside elements, although it is designed to offer protection from the weight of the earth and cemetery equipment. All of the burial vaults we distribute are designed to support these elements and more.

The Burial Process.

To understand the need for a burial vault, let's explain what takes place at a cemetery before, during and after a graveside service. The cemetery workers will open a loved one's grave using a backhoe or other type of mechanical equipment. A backhoe can weigh up to 25,000 pounds. As it passes over the grave, it not only exerts tremendous dynamic or moving load, but possibly extreme impact loads while digging adjacent graves.

The burial vault is delivered to the grave just prior to the service. The vault is carefully moved to the gravesite and placed on a lowering device positioned over the freshly dug grave. We offer an optional nameplate with the name, birth date and death date of the deceased for all of the products we sell. Other personalization such as life or religious symbols may be placed on the vault before delivery.

After the final ceremonies, our trained personnel properly seal the vault while it is above ground and it is then gently lowered into the grave.

How Burial Vaults Work

The structural design of the burial vault supports the weight of the earth above the casket by: 1) Distributing the weight evenly over the vault's surface. 2) The use of reinforcing ribs in the design. And 3) The use of sealing materials. The weight of the earth above a grave can exert tremendous pressure. Mechanical equipment, backhoes and delivery trucks can exceed 25,000 pounds as they pass over the grave. Unlike concrete vaults which rely on bruit strength to hold the weight (they weigh between 2,300 and 2,700 pounds) our products use superior materials and technology to support the earth above the grave.

Many of the concrete manufacturers emphasize that the use of lining and sealing materials places the most efficient resources available between the outside forces of weight and water and the casket that has been placed inside. Linings and butyl seals merge the cover and base of the vault into a water-resistant unit. They work together to keep the effects of outside elements from damaging the casket and its contents. In essence, we have taken the very best parts of the concrete burial vault, the plastic and metal liners, and engineered them into high quality, efficient performing units.