

CANA Annual Statistics Report

Featuring final 2019 data, newly released 2020 data, and projections to 2025

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2020—A Year of Unprecedented Cremation Numbers and Continued Predictable Growth Rate

Over the past 50 years, cremation rates have grown predictably and followed a growth curve, and 2020 was no different. The 2020 cremation rate of 56.1% reflected an increase of 1.5% over the 2019 rate of 54.6%. This is well within the predicted rate. But the cremation numbers tell a different story. Between 2015 and 2019, deaths have increased on average 35,000 year over year. In 2020, the U.S. death numbers increased by nearly 500,000. Of those deaths, 321,000 resulted in cremation.

Cremation is driven by customer choice. Death care business models, protective legislation, pricing, etc., have had no visible impact on cremation rate growth or decline. Not even a pandemic could disrupt the cremation growth pattern, at least not immediately. More families than ever before have selected cremation, so this could impact the adoption of cremation for future deaths. But more likely, we can anticipate lower death and cremation numbers over the coming years because the additional 2020 deaths were premature (see *Cremation Rates Stay Predictable Throughout the Pandemic*, p. 15).

As CANA has noted in prior years, only new consumer preferences, such as body donation and green burial, are likely to impact cremation growth regionally or nationally.

Methodology

Since 1913, CANA has been collecting death and cremation data from a variety of sources. Over the past twenty years, CANA has published figures primarily obtained through state and provincial governments in the United States and Canada. Based on disposition data derived from death certificates, CANA has determined the annual percentage of cremations to deaths and forecasts future cremation percentages.

Please note that many states and provinces, as a matter of policy, do not release provisional data. The data reported for 2020 is provisional, subject to change, and collected from what was available at the time of publication. When the state or province would not provide data, staff retrieved death counts from national sources to support the statistical projections during this unpredictable year.

Projections

A regression analysis was implemented to aid the interpretation of the data. CANA's consultant develops and runs five models to describe

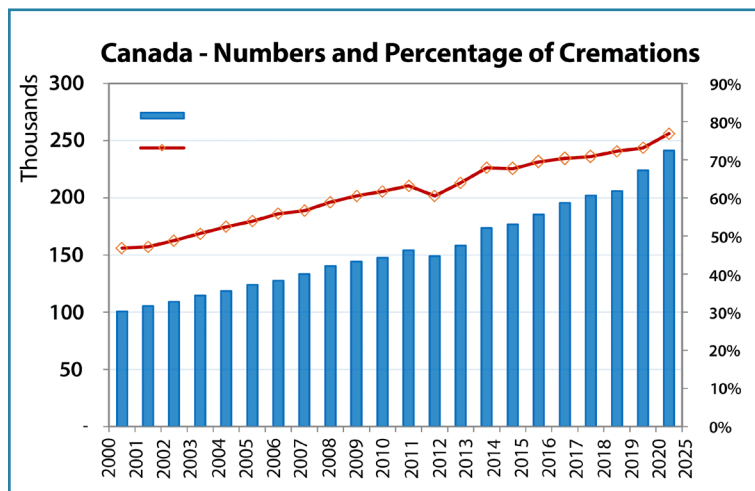
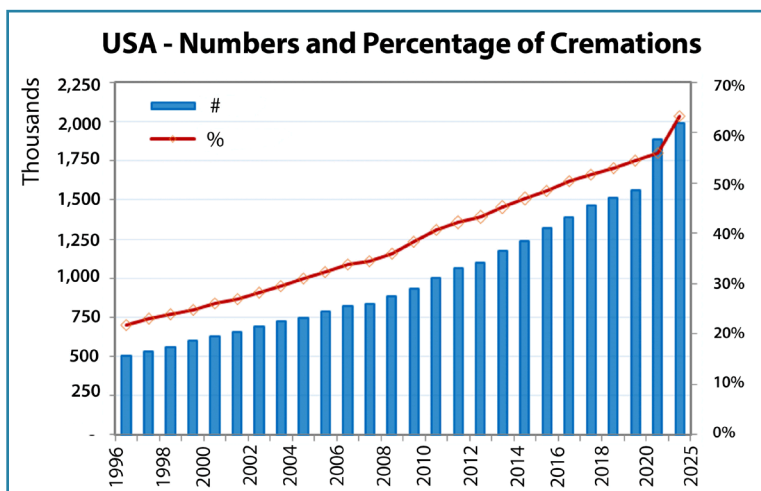
future percentages and reported the average of those five models.

This regression analysis was applied over a twenty-year period in states and provinces where such a data set was available. From these figures, CANA has determined the annual percentage of cremations to deaths, which includes all the states and provinces. CANA has also been able to use these figures to forecast future cremation percentages. Distant projections do not account for the excess deaths of 2020 or the potential of the novel coronavirus or other widespread disaster to occur.

Two Canadian provinces have stopped releasing disposition data from provisional agencies—Ontario and Quebec. As described in footnotes, data is collected from provincial associations and CANA members to validate statistical projections.

For detailed information about our methodology, contact info@cremationassociation.org

United States and Canadian Cremation Trends



Annual Growth Rate

The annual growth rate is the difference between the yearly percentages of deaths cremated and averaged over a five-year period. The tables below show the rates for the United States and Canada from 2005 through 2020. Further, these tables illustrate that the cremation rate is increasing exponentially, with the current average growth at 1.50% annually in the U.S. and 1.10% in Canada.

Annual Growth Rate – Five Year Average USA	
Year	% Cremated
2005	32.4%
2010	40.8%
2015	48.6%
2020	56.1%
% Change 2005 - 2010	8.4%
% Change 2010 - 2015	7.8%
% Change 2015 - 2020	7.5%
Annual Growth Rate per year over 2014-2019	1.50%

Annual Growth Rate – Five Year Average Canada	
Year	% Cremated
2005	53.8%
2010	61.6%
2015	67.6%
2020	73.1%
% Change 2005 - 2010	7.8%
% Change 2010 - 2015	6.0%
% Change 2015 - 2020	5.5%
Annual Growth Rate per year over 2014-2019	1.10%

Percentages of Cremations in the States/Provinces for 2016 and 2020

