

Ordinance No.: 20-24
Zoning Text Amendment No.: 25-09
Concerning: Funeral and Interment
Services – Alkaline
Hydrolysis
Revised: 9/23/2025 Draft No.: 2
Introduced: June 17, 2025
Public Hearing: July 22, 2025
Adopted: September 30, 2025
Effective: October 20, 2025

**COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION OF
THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT WITHIN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Fani-González

AN AMENDMENT to the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to:

- (1) allow alkaline hydrolysis as an accessory use in Funeral Home, Undertaker;
- (2) allow alkaline hydrolysis in a Crematory; and
- (3) generally amend the Funeral and Interment Services uses.

By amending the following sections of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59 of the Montgomery County Code:

Division 1.4.	“Defined Terms”
Section 1.4.2.	“Specific Terms and Phrases Defined”
Division 3.5.	“Commercial Uses”
Section 3.5.4.	“Funeral and Interment Services”

EXPLANATION: ***Boldface** indicates a Heading or a defined term.*

Underlining indicates text that is added to existing law by the original text amendment.

[Single boldface brackets] indicate text that is deleted from existing law by original text amendment.

Double underlining indicates text that is added to the text amendment by amendment.

[[Double boldface brackets]] indicate text that is deleted from the text amendment by amendment.

** * * indicates existing law unaffected by the text amendment.*

ORDINANCE

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following ordinance:

Sec. 1. DIVISION 59-1.4 is amended as follows:

Division 1.4. Defined Terms

* * *

Section 1.4.2. Specific Terms and Phrases Defined

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Alkaline hydrolysis: The process of reducing [[human remains]] a deceased body using water, alkaline chemicals, and heat inside a watertight vessel to accelerate decomposition [[of a human body]].

* * *

Cremation: The disposition of a [[dead human]] deceased body by means of
incineration.

Crematory: See Section 3.5.4.B.1

* * *

Funeral Home, Undertaker: See Section 3.5.4.C.1

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Sec. 2. DIVISION 59-3.5 is amended as follows:

Division 3.5. Commercial Uses

* * *

Section 3.5.4. Funeral and Interment Services

* * *

B. Crematory

1. Defined

Crematory means a structure in which cremation or alkaline hydrolysis occurs.

2. Use Standards

Where a Crematory is allowed as a conditional use, it may be permitted by the Hearing Examiner under Section 7.3.1, Conditional Use.

C. Funeral Home, Undertaker

1. Defined

Funeral Home, Undertaker means a facility that holds and transports human remains to and from the premises; embalms and caskets remains; allows visits to view the remains and conduct business with the establishment; and conducts funeral and memorial services, including organization of funeral processions.

2. Use Standards

a. Where a Funeral Home, Undertaker is allowed as a limited use, it must satisfy the following standards:

- i. The cremation of remains is prohibited. Alkaline hydrolysis is allowed as an accessory use.
- ii. The funeral home may include a dwelling or sleeping facilities either as a separate building or a portion of the main building to be occupied by the owner or an employee of the establishment.
- iii. If public water and sewer are available, they must be used for the operation of the facility. Where public water and sewer are not available, chemicals used for burial preparation are prohibited.
- iv. Queuing of motor vehicles is prohibited in the public right-of-way.
- v. If the subject lot abuts or confronts a property zoned Agricultural, Rural Residential, or Residential Detached that is vacant or improved with an agricultural or residential use, site plan approval is required under Section 7.3.4.

- b. Where a Funeral Home, Undertaker is allowed as a conditional use, it may be permitted by the Hearing Examiner under Section 3.5.4.C.2.a.i through Section 3.5.4.C.2.a.iii, Section 7.3.1, Conditional Use, and the following standards:
- i. The minimum side setback is 50 feet.
 - ii. The minimum rear setback is 50 feet.
 - iii. Frontage upon and access to a street or roadway having more than one through travel lane in each direction of travel.
 - iv. In the RE-2, RE-1, R-200, and R-90 zones, the minimum lot area is 2 acres.
 - v. In the AR zone, this use is allowed only where it is operating with a Cemetery established by conditional use approval before August 20, 2001. Also, this use may be prohibited under Section 3.1.5, Transferable Development Rights.
 - vi. Alkaline hydrolysis is allowed as an accessory use.

* * *

Sec. 3. Effective date. This ordinance becomes effective 20 days after the date of Council adoption.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sara R. Tenenbaum
Clerk of the Council