

Charter for the Bereaved: The Guiding Principles

Caring for the Community

All cremation and burial facilities shall be managed with competence and efficiency, to ensure that the entire bereavement experience occurs without error or insensitivity and meets the religious, secular, ethnic and cultural needs of the bereaved. The service shall comply with all statutory and Health and Safety requirements.

Service Sensitivity

The burial or cremation of a human body is a highly emotional occasion for those taking part. Each cemetery & crematorium must be managed to create and maintain an atmosphere of solace and respect throughout the entire proceedings. This sensitivity must extend to all staff and contractors working at facilities, through the application of bereavement sensitive specifications. Members will respond sympathetically to individual funeral needs and shall give a justifiable reason for refusing any specific request.

Staff

All staff should possess qualifications and undergo recognised training specific to their duties. At senior management level, the appointment of staff in possession of the Diploma of the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration should be seen as a minimum requirement. The appointment of all staff must emphasise the need for proper conduct and demeanour, as well as technical expertise. Staff must act and speak in a manner that recognises the sensitivity of bereavement, both during and outside working hours and should not accept gratuities. Name badges should identify all staff.

Environmental Issues

Every Charter member shall minimise the impact of bereavement upon the environment. This should encourage the greater use of earth friendly materials, particularly in coffins and containers used for burial or cremation, a reduction of fossil fuel usage and emissions to air and the use of suitable ground for burial so that water borne pollution shall not occur. Metal residues found in cremated remains shall not be salvaged for any purpose. They shall not be removed from the crematorium and shall be interred in the grounds.

Individual Disposal

The importance of human beings as individuals and the manner in which they inter-relate with relatives and friends does not diminish in significance following death. It is important for the bereaved to know that the burial or cremation is individually carried out and that the following requirements must, therefore be met: -

1. General Conditions

No coffin/container/shroud shall be accepted at a cemetery unless the name of the deceased therein is clearly shown. The identity shown on the coffin/container/shroud shall be verified at every funeral. If burial is to occur, the body and its coffin/container/shroud shall be placed in the identified grave. If cremation is to occur, the body shall be cremated individually and the correct identity shall be maintained throughout the process.

2. Requirements relating to Burial

After the coffin/container/shroud and body have been committed into the grave, they shall not be removed or otherwise disturbed except for lawful exhumation, by licence and or faculty or by order of the Coroner. Immediately after the mourners have departed the graveside, the grave shall be entirely backfilled and made tidy. This work will be completed on the day of the burial and must not extend overnight.

3. Inspection

Everyone has the right to inspect the cemetery during normal working hours, upon application to the manager of the facility.