



INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS

1. RESPONSIBILITY

The Funeral Director shall observe the regulations of the Cremation Authority. The Funeral Director is responsible for the provision of sufficient bearers to convey the coffin from the hearse to the catafalque, a minimum of 4 bearers is required. When the coffin is in position on the catafalque at the Crematorium the responsibility of the Funeral Director towards it ceases and that of the Cremation Authority begins.

2. NOTICE OF CREMATION

The length of notice to be given for a cremation and the time of the cremation, as agreed, must be strictly adhered to. All statutory and non-statutory forms and certificates, as required by the Cremation Authority, must reach the crematorium office by the specified time.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF THE COFFIN

The coffin must be made of a suitable material which, when placed in a cremator and subjected to the cremation process, is easily combustible and which does not emit smoke, give off toxic gas or leave any retardant smears or drips after final combustion. No metal of any kind shall be used in the manufacture of such coffin except as necessary for its safe construction and then only metal of a high ferrous content. Cross pieces must not be attached to the bottom of the coffin. If it is desired to strengthen the bottom of the coffin, wooden strips may be placed lengthways for this purpose.

Cardboard coffins should not contain chlorine in the wet strength agent. (e.g. not using polyamidoamine-epichlorhydrin based resin (PAA-E). Contact should be made with the Crematorium Administration to ensure that the coffin selected is fit for the purpose of cremation.

4. COFFIN FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

No metal furniture or fittings whatever shall be used on a coffin for cremation. Coffin handles should be free from unnecessary metal components. External coatings to a coffin must allow for smokeless combustion and the use of nitro-cellulose varnish, polyurethane, melamine and any products containing polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or melamine must not be used in coffin construction or furnishings. Water based lacquer free from additives containing heavy metals may be used for coating a coffin or a suitable cloth may be used for covering a coffin. The exception to the foregoing is the use of polystyrene which is restricted to the coffin nameplate only and this must not exceed 90 grams in weight.

5. LINING OF THE COFFIN

The use of saw dust, cotton wool or shredded paper within a coffin must be avoided. If lining of a coffin is necessary, this should be manufactured from polythene not exceeding 75 microns in

thickness. Lead or zinc linings must not be used. The use of shredded paper within a coffin is not permitted.

6. SIZE OF THE COFFIN

Where the external dimensions of a coffin are likely to exceed length 81 inches (206cms); width 28 inches (71cms); depth 22 inches (56cms) the proper officer of the crematorium must be consulted as soon as practicable.

7. CLOTHING AND COFFIN CONTENT

In order to minimise the release of pollutants to air, it is recommended that clothing should be of natural fibres and that shoes or any material manufactured from PVC should not be included. Body adornments manufactured from copper should be removed as should any easily removable prostheses or casts of plaster or other material. Additional items, particularly of glass or plastic, should not be placed within the coffin.

8. CREMATION OF INFANTS and FOETAL REMAINS

Mothers of non-viable babies and families of stillborn babies and very young deceased babies considering cremation should be advised that comprehensive guidance is available for use within UK crematoria to ensure that the operational practices in place maximise the opportunity to recover ashes at the end of the cremation process. However, as highlighted within the Report of the Infant Cremation Commission as led by Lord Bonomy, it should be made clear that there is a possibility that ashes will not be recovered, and families should be reminded of the availability of the option of burial.

If the advice is not given the parents may have been denied the choice of earth burial and thereby subjected to understandable distress.

9. BODY PARTS

Body parts presented at the crematorium for cremation normally consists of soft tissue which in the absence of any bone structure will not produce any cremated remains.

10. CREMATED REMAINS/ASHES

The utmost care should be taken when dealing with cremated remains/ashes. If the Funeral Director supplies an urn or casket for cremated remains/ashes it should be of sufficient internal dimension to provide a minimum of 200 cubic inches (3,280 cubic cms.) and securely labelled. The container should be strong enough to resist breakage in transit.

The lid must fit tightly, and the fastening should be strong enough to prevent the lid being forced open by distortion of the container through maltreatment in transit.