
RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DEAD HUMAN BODIES FOR CREMATION BY MORTUARIES, CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIES

*Originally developed by the Cremation Association of North America
Modified and Endorsed by the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association*

PREFACE: PURPOSE FOR PROCEDURES

There are many considerations that must be taken into account when a Mortuary, Cemetery or Crematory is entrusted with the disposition of Human Remains. Identification of the deceased, holding the remains for cremation process, and processing, packing and disposition of the cremated remains are items of concern not only to the Mortuary, Cemetery and Crematory, but also to the consuming public. High standards must be employed during all phases of the Cremation Process.

Therefore, uniform procedures have been developed in order to maintain the professionalism and public trust expected from those involved in this vital service. It is the objective of the following procedures to ensure that all procedures reflect those high standards and serve as a guide for those professionals charged with the sacred trust of the disposition of the human dead by cremation within the realm of law and dignity.

SECTION 1. TERMINOLOGY (DEFINITIONS)

- 1.1 *Authorizing Agent(s)* - The person(s) legally entitled to order the cremation of the Human Remains.
- 1.2 *Cremated Remains* - The remaining bone fragments after the Cremation Process is completed.
- 1.3 *Cremation* - The technical heating process that reduces Human Remains to bone fragments. This reduction takes place through combustion and evaporation.
- 1.4 *Cremation Chamber* - The enclosed space within which the cremation process takes place. Cremation chambers covered by these procedures shall be used exclusively for the cremation of human remains.
- 1.5 *Cremation Container* - The case in which the Human Remains should be delivered to the Crematory to be placed in the Cremation Chamber for Cremation. The Cremation Container should meet the following standards.
 1. Be composed of a suitable combustible material;
 2. Be rigid enough for handling with ease;
 3. Assure protection to the health and safety of the operator;
 4. Provide proper covering for the Human Remains;
 5. Meet moral codes for respect and dignity.
- 1.6 *Crematory Authority* - The legal entity or the authorized representative of the legal entity who conducts the Cremation.
- 1.7 *Crematory or Crematorium* - The building that houses the Cremation Chamber.
- 1.8 *Holding Facility* - An area designated for the retention of Human Remains prior to Cremation with the Crematory facilities that shall:
 1. Comply with any applicable public health laws;
 2. Preserve the dignity of the Human Remains;
 3. Recognize the personal integrity and health of the Crematory Authority personnel operating the Cremation Chamber.
- 1.9 *Human Remains* - The dead human body prior to Cremation.
- 1.10 *Processed Remains* - The end result of pulverization, where the residual from the Cremation Process is cleaned leaving only bone fragments reduced to unidentifiable dimensions.
- 1.11 *Sealable Container* - Any container in which Processed Remains can be placed and sealed so as to prevent leakage of Processed Remains or the entrance of foreign materials.

SECTION 2. REMOVAL AND IDENTIFICATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

- 2.1 Immediately upon taking custody of Human Remains, a Crematory Authority shall verify that the Human Remains bear a means of identification attached thereto. A Crematory Authority shall not accept unidentified Human Remains.
- 2.2 Materials identifying the Human Remains placed in the custody of the Crematory Authority should contain the following information:
 1. Name of deceased;
 2. Date and time of death;
 3. Place of death;
 4. Name and relationship of Authorizing Agent;
 5. Name of Authorizing Agent or firm engaging Crematory services.
- 2.3 If the Crematory Authority takes custody subsequent to the Human Remains being placed within a Cremation Container, the Crematory Authority shall satisfy itself that identification has been made as described in Section 2.2 and thereafter shall place a similar appropriate identification upon the exterior of the Cremation Container.

SECTION 3. HOLDING HUMAN REMAINS FOR CREMATION

- 3.1 When the Crematory Authority is unable to cremate the Human Remains immediately upon taking custody thereof, the Crematory Authority shall provide a Holding Facility as defined in Section 1.8.

- 3.2 A Crematory Authority shall not hold the Human Remains for Cremation unless it is contained within an individual, rigid and closed Cremation Container as defined in Section 1.5.
- 3.3 A Crematory Authority shall not accept for holding a Cremation Container from which there is any evidence of leakage of the body fluids from the Human Remains therein.
- 3.4 Human Remains that are not embalmed shall be held only within a refrigerated facility or in compliance with applicable public health regulations.
- 3.5 Holding Facilities shall be secure from access by anyone other than Crematory Authority personnel.

SECTION 4. CREMATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

- 4.1 The unauthorized simultaneous Cremation of more than one Human Remains within the same Cremation Chamber is specifically forbidden.
- 4.2 Immediately prior to being placed within the Cremation Chamber, the identification of the Human Remains shall be verified by the Crematory Authority and the identification from the outside of the Cremation Container shall be removed and placed near the Cremation Chamber control panel where it shall remain in place until the Cremation Process is complete.
- 4.3 A Crematory Authority should not simultaneously Cremate more than one Human Remains within the same Cremation Chamber.

SECTION 5. PROCESSING OF CREMATED REMAINS

- 5.1 Upon completion of the Cremation, insofar as is possible, all residual of the Cremation process shall be removed from the Cremation Chamber and the chamber swept clean. The residual shall be placed within a container or tray that will ensure against co-mingling with other Cremated Remains; and the identification removed from the control panel area and attached to the container or tray to await final processing.
- 5.2 The Authorization to Cremate should explain that Cremation reduces the Human Remains to recognizable bone fragments. These bone fragments and the residue of the Cremation are placed in a sealable container for:
 1. Interment or inurnment may require some further processing if not legally required.
 2. When scattering the remains they should be further processed to an unrecognizable condition.All additional residual from the cremation should be processed to an unidentifiable dimension before disposal.
- 5.3 All body prosthesis, bridgework or similar items removed from the Cremated Remains, shall be disposed of by the Crematory Authority unless authority to do otherwise is specially granted in writing. Authorization to dispose of prosthesis should be included in the cremated authorization by the Authorizing Agent.

SECTION 6. PACKAGING OF CREMATED REMAINS

- 6.1 The entire Processed Remains shall be placed in a Sealable Container as defined in Section 1.11. The Sealable Container contents shall not be contaminated with any other object unless specific authorization has been received from the Authorizing Agent.
- 6.2 The Sealable Container together with the identification of the Cremated Remains shall be placed either within a temporary container or the designated receptacle ordered by the Authorizing Agent. Should the Cremated Remains within the Sealable Container not adequately fill the container's interior dimensions, the extra space may be filled with shredded paper or clean absorbent cotton and the lid or top then securely closed.
- 6.3 If the entire Processed Remains will not fit within the dimensions of the designated receptacle, the remainder shall be returned either in a separate container, or upon written permission of the Authorizing Agent, be disposed of according to the established procedures of the Crematory Authority.
- 6.4 When a temporary container is used to return the Processed Remains, it is recommended that the container be placed within a corrugated box and all box seams taped closed to increase the security and integrity of that container. The outside of the container shall be clearly identified with the name of the deceased person whose Processed Remains are contained therein.

SECTION 7. DISPOSITION OF CREMATED REMAINS

- 7.1 A Crematory Authority shall keep an accurate record of all cremations performed, including disposition, for a period of not less than five (5) consecutive years.
- 7.2 Any legal forms of Cremation Authorization shall contain wording that will hold harmless a Crematory Authority from the disposition of unclaimed Cremated Remains after a stated period of time.
- 7.3 With written permission from the Authorizing Agent, a Crematory may dispose of Cremated Remains in any legal manner.