

December 2020

### **Direct Cremation Policy**

A small, but significant, number of bereaved families are now choosing to move away from the traditional funeral which has involved the mourners holding part, or all, of the ceremony at the crematorium. Instead, they are deciding to have no ceremony, or one which takes place at a venue other than the crematorium chapel. In such instances, the deceased is brought in a hearse or private ambulance with no family members present, specifically for cremation. No service time is required so the deceased can be brought outside normal operating hours to leave the chapel free for those who require it. In meeting this need, Breckland Crematorium Ltd have endorsed this policy which is based on guidance provided by the FBCA to ensure that the same standard of care is provided for direct cremations as shown to traditional funerals.

- 1. Dignified care.** The care shown to the deceased at a direct cremation must be the same as any traditional funeral where the family is present. Item 1 of the Code of Cremation Practice states that: 'The cremation of a human body is a highly emotional occasion for those taking part in the service. This must never be forgotten by the staff of the crematorium who must work together to create and maintain a dignified atmosphere of reverence and respect throughout the entire proceedings.' The same high standard of care must be given to all funerals.
- 2. Statutory forms.** The statutory requirements, including forms, relating to direct cremations are the same as those required for traditional cremations. In addition, the non-statutory application for cremation setting out the operational requirements, including the day and date of cremation and how the ashes are to be disposed of, must also be provided in accordance with the timescales set out by the Cremation Authority.
- 3. Agreed arrival time.** The Cremation Authority must agree with the funeral director an appropriate time for the coffin to arrive at the crematorium. The assigned time must be adhered to as in a traditional funeral. In accordance with good practice, it will be checked by the appropriate officer.
- 4. Entrance to be used.** In accordance with the FBCA Code of Cremation Practice, all coffins must enter the crematorium through an appropriate entrance. This will normally be the main chapel entrance which is used for traditional funerals where a ceremony is required. If the crematorium has a separate entrance for cremations where no ceremony is to take place, it must be as set out in the code, below: *PRIOR TO COMMITMENT A coffin and its contents brought to the crematorium, whether for a service prior to cremation, a planned cremation without a service, or for a service prior to burial, shall be brought into the crematorium building through an appropriate\* entrance. If the coffin and its contents are to be cremated, the coffin shall be transferred directly to the crematory in the normal manner. \*Note: Where the crematorium offers more than one entrance for receiving the deceased, they must be designed for the required purpose and be suitable for the dignified reception of coffins. The entrance should be visible to the public, should be sufficiently wide enough for clear access, e.g. double doors, and where it enters the crematory directly, it should pass through two sets of double doors. The Cremation Authority must obtain the prior, informed, written consent of the Applicant for Cremation for the use of whichever entrance is required.*

5. **Suitable vehicle to be used.** The vehicle used to convey the deceased to the crematorium must be fit for purpose, clean and suitable in accordance with recognised industry standards.
6. **Sufficient bearers.** The funeral director shall provide sufficient qualified and competent employees to ensure that the deceased is conveyed in accordance with all relevant policies, rules, procedures and statutory requirements concerning health and safety at work and manual handling. The bearers will be suitably attired, to the same standard as an attended funeral, maintaining the highest standard of courtesy, consideration and confidentiality.
7. **Coffin.** The coffin must be suitable for cremation and bear adequate details of the deceased.
8. **Checks.** A representative of the Cremation Authority must check the coffin for correct identity prior to admission to the crematorium building. The representative will be suitably attired, to the same standard as an attended funeral, maintaining the highest standard of courtesy, consideration and confidentiality.
9. **Coffin storage.** The crematorium must provide sufficient and suitable facilities for the reception and dignified storage of the deceased in the form of racking or, where it is intended to retain the deceased overnight, a secure and sanitary area. If it is intended to retain the deceased overnight, the applicant must have provided consent in the same manner as a traditional funeral.
10. **Refusal to accept a coffin.** The Cremation Authority may refuse to accept any coffin which, in the opinion of the Crematorium Manager, does not demonstrate the care and dignity implicit in this guidance.