

Code of Ethics

of the

Funeral Directors and Embalmers of Manitoba



Funeral Board of Manitoba
Conseil des services funéraires
du Manitoba

Introduction:

The Code of Ethics of the Funeral Directors and Embalmers of Manitoba is founded on the principles of trust, honesty, transparency and competency. Failure to follow the code may result in a hearing, fines, reprimand, and/or suspension or revocation of licences.

Code of Ethics:

Under the code, funeral directors are expected to treat with the greatest respect the clients they serve, the deceased with whom they are entrusted; the general public who seek information; the cultural values, religious traditions, and familial relationships of all; the private information they are given; and the laws of the province; and the profession in which they serve.

1. Services to Clients

Funeral directors and embalmers meet families and clients when someone has died. Because this is often an emotional time and unfamiliar experience, families are vulnerable. Funeral directors and embalmers have a legal and ethical responsibility to provide fair, non judgmental and competent information and service. In matters regarding accountability to the families and clients, funeral directors must:

- a) Provide a copy of the Board's brochure to the consumer for their permanent use, at the first meeting.
- b) Provide fair and consistent services, without discrimination against individuals, respecting the faiths, beliefs and customs of the families they serve;
- c) Uphold in the strictest confidence matters pertaining to the family of the deceased;
- d) Provide funeral services that balance compassion for the family with understanding of the gravity of their grief;
- e) Explain what products and services are required by law and which are optional, in a fair and non judgmental manner;
- f) Indicate clearly if products, offered for sale or use, have been used before;

- g) Ensure family decisions on all matters (including services, timing, and prices), have been fulfilled, whenever reasonable;
- h) Explain any document presented to a client, including any that require signature;
- i) Explain the option of embalming and consequences of delayed embalming, when applicable;
- j) Obtain permission, written preferably, of next of kin or designated representative, to embalm or cremate; and
- k) Indicate clearly the full range of available benefits and options of social services, veteran's affairs, and various government and private agencies to which the individual may be entitled.

2. Services to the Deceased

Funeral Directors and Embalmers are trusted with the remains of deceased people and have legal and ethical responsibilities implicit in that trust. In matters regarding the deceased, funeral directors must:

- a) Ensure that every deceased person is treated with care and dignity at the time of receipt, during all transportation and all proceedings;
- b) Take possession, or seek to take possession, of a deceased person only when authorized by the family or designated representative;
- c) Safeguard any personal effects of the deceased, and follow the wishes of the family regarding the disposition of those items;
- d) Issue documents, such as a *Funeral Director's Statement/Certificate of Death*, only when the family has signed a contract for services, and the funeral director has received the Registration of Death form;
- e) Ensure that no body parts are removed (except for pacemakers and other approved devices);
- f) Ensure all technical steps are followed and overseen by licensed professionals; and

- g) Ensure the remains of the deceased are disposed as directed by the family, regardless of the status of payment.

3. Services to the Public

Funeral Directors and Embalmers have an obligation to provide consumers and potential consumers of services and products with clear information to enable informed decision making. In matters regarding the consumers and potential consumers, a funeral director must:

- a) Provide complete and honest information about all services;
- b) Provide a full written list of prices of the services the consumer has selected, within the first meeting;
- c) Provide all communication in a clear and easily understood manner;
- d) Provide all information about laws, regulations and processes in a transparent and true manner;
- e) Ensure all advertising, including products, services and pricing is clear, truthful and presented in a manner that is not misleading;
- f) Protect the privacy of the deceased and the family, by protecting information from disclosure or use not permitted by law;
- g) Issue funeral director's statement(s) of death only after completing the Registration of Death for filing with Vital Statistics;
- h) Give the consumer a reasonable period of time alone to consider options before signing the contract;
- i) Provide twenty-four (24) hours to cancel the contract after time of signing of the consumer, if the family has not directed immediate actions; and
- j) Ensure that a family member, lawyer, or independent advisor is present during the presentation about funeral services to a vulnerable person and during any signing of a contract.

4. Compliance with the law and respect for the profession

Funeral Directors and Embalmers have a legal and professional responsibility to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and an ethical responsibility to represent the profession in an honourable manner. In matters regarding the laws and profession, a funeral director will:

- a) Comply with all licencing and permit requirements established by regulatory bodies;
- b) Comply with all laws and regulations relating to the profession;
- c) Comply with all consumer and environmental laws;
- d) Respect the authority and oversight of the Board of Administration;
- e) Comply with all requests to appear before the Board in a timely manner;
- f) Maintain a high level of professional courtesy by being respectful to and positive about colleagues;
- g) Ensure all staff are aware of and comply with the code of ethics at all times;
and
- h) Report any breaches of the Act, regulation and code to the Board, as soon as possible.