

## **Code of Ethics**

### **Introduction**

Dublin Cemeteries Trust, The Islands and Mount Jerome crematoria have developed this Code with the assistance of the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management.

In the absence of specific legislation relating to cremation in the Republic of Ireland the above mentioned crematoria have devised this document as a means of agreed self regulation that will provide security of the certification process and a level of service that will instil confidence in the bereaved and government.

Through the publication of this Code, the intention is to raise the profile and status of cremation as an acceptable alternative to burial and thereby create awareness of choice for funeral arrangements.

This Code will be regularly reviewed in order to keep pace with changing public attitude and requirements.

### **Cremation Documentation**

In the absence of statutory cremation documentation the above named crematoria have developed a standard medical form that is completed by the medical practitioner that attended the deceased during the last illness and hence certified the cause of death. This document will be reviewed periodically in order to keep pace with statutory documents in place in other countries.

### **Independent Scrutiny**

Each crematorium has appointed an independent qualified medical practitioner, currently referred to as the Medical Referee, who will scrutinise each medical form prior to cremation taking place. Cremation will not be permitted until written notice is received from the Medical Referee that the cause of death has been identified and that there is no reason to refer the case to the Coroner. Any cases that are referred to the Coroner, either directly or by the Medical Referee, will not be cremated until the Coroner has made his/her investigations and released the deceased for cremation.

### **Caring for the Community**

All cremation 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 cremation of a human body is a highly emotional occasion for those taking part. Each 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. Crematoria will respond sympathetically to individual funeral needs and shall give a justifiable reason for refusing any specific request.

## Staff

All staff should be properly trained and ideally possess recognised qualifications that are specific to their duties.

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.

All staff should be willing to operate flexible working hours to meet the requirements of the service.

All staff should be identified by name badges.

## Environmental Issues

Each crematorium shall minimise the impact of bereavement upon the environment wherever possible. This should encourage the greater use of earth friendly materials and environmentally friendly practices, particularly including:

### General

- Ensuring the use of suitable coffins and containers for cremation. The use of plastics should be minimised with natural materials encouraged wherever possible. Zinc or lead lined coffins cannot be cremated.
- Employing the use of the most environmentally friendly materials in the maintenance of grounds
- Recycling of green waste from grounds maintenance works
- Recycling, where law permits, of any other material for which permission of the applicant for cremation has been obtained

### Specific

Emissions to air are of great concern to the public. All crematoria should actively seek to reduce emissions to the air by:

- Promoting the most effective use of energy within the crematorium. This could include consideration of heat exchange units to capture energy that is currently wasted.
- Ensuring the optimum usage of crematorium plant and equipment by holding over cremations to the following day to prevent unnecessary pre-heating of a cremator for a low number of cremations (See specific conditions below).

- Advising that clothing the deceased in clothes made of natural fibre/materials is acceptable whereas plastic, nylon and other synthetic materials are not acceptable due to the impact on the environment via emissions.

## Individual Cremation

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 cremation is individually carried out, and the following requirements must, therefore, be met:

### General conditions

- No coffin/container/shroud shall be accepted at a crematorium unless the name of the deceased therein is clearly shown.
- The identity shown on the coffin/container/shroud shall be verified at every funeral.
- The body shall be cremated individually and the correct identity shall be maintained throughout the process.
- If requested by the Applicant for Cremation the lid of the coffin or container may be removed for the duration of the chapel service and subsequently replaced prior to the committal (This action cannot be permitted in cases where cause of death is a notifiable disease).

### Specific

- A body shall not be removed from the crematorium after the service of committal, except by order of a Coroner or for some other valid reason.
- The container and the body shall be placed in a cremator and cremation commenced no later than 72 hours after the service of committal. Where cremation may not be carried out on the same day, the Applicant for Cremation shall be notified.
- The coffin or container with the body inside shall not be opened or otherwise disturbed after the committal other than in exceptional circumstances and then only in the presence of and with the permission of the Applicant for Cremation, or for a lawful purpose as directed by a higher authority.
- Once a coffin or container has been placed in a cremator, it shall not be disturbed until the process of cremation is complete.
- On completion, the whole of the cremated remains shall be removed from the cremator and reduced to granular form, except where this is specifically not requested, and shall be disposed of or released according to the instructions of the Applicant for Cremation.
- Cremated remains placed in the Garden of Remembrance shall be treated with reverence and respect. If strewn, they should be obscured by soil or brushing. Where a local practice of strewing in the form of a cross or other pattern has developed, it is acceptable providing it does not result in the unsightly build-up or prolonged visibility of the cremated remains. Cremated remains must be labelled and released in suitable, unused containers, and where sent by registered post or secure carrier, capable of withstanding transit without damage.

### **Commercialisation of Products or Residues of Cremation**

The products or residues of a cremation shall not be used for any commercial purpose however they may be recycled for charitable purposes.

### **Inspection**

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

Crematoria will consider holding open days and/or annual services of remembrance in order to create wider awareness of the cremation process and thereby foster a greater understanding amongst members of the public.

This Code of Ethics and Operational Standards will be regularly reviewed, and updated where appropriate, to ensure that they remain relevant and meet the changing needs of the bereaved, the environment and the society in which we all live.