



Brian Parent

OFSA Shares Coroner's Information



The following letter was previously distributed in November of 2009. The OFSA would like to share its content with the rest of the funeral profession.

Dear members of the Ontario Funeral Service Association and the funeral directors of Ontario, With regards to the memo dated May of 2009 from the chief coroner, Province of Ontario, many of you had expressed concerns which may have been interpreted to be additional responsibilities placed upon funeral directors from the coroner's office. To address this for you, a meeting was held with Dr. A.E. Lauwers, deputy chief coroner, Province of Ontario, Brian Parent from OFSA, Paul Newbigging from Open Dialogue, and Allan Cole from MacKinnon and Bowes.

It was apparent from this meeting that the memo was intended to help facilitate certificates of cremation between funeral directors and local coroners. It was never intended to add additional responsibilities to the funeral establishments of Ontario.

Transmitting Cremation Certificates by Facsimile (Fax)

With today's technology, electronic transfer of documents has become increasingly common with faxed documentation being accepted in many legal situations.

When the coroner supplies a fax number, they become responsible for the accuracy of the number supplied. Although we caution that should you send a medical certificate of death to another number by accident, this could result in a breach of privacy. Our advice is that should you choose to send medical certificates in this manner, care should be taken to ensure the number you are utilizing is correct. It was also suggested that you start obtaining email addresses of your local coroners and scan copies of medical certificates to be forwarded to them via email. The choice is between you and the coroner.

Delivering a medical certificate of death to the local coroner's office continues to be a viable option.

Discussion Between the Coroner and the Funeral Director


The funeral director's responsibility to report any issues where additional investigation would be required, has not changed from what we have been obligated to do in the past. We are not expected to investigate, but rather, just report if we find or hear of any reason to be concerned about the cause and manner of death.

Administrative Responsibility

Occasionally, the coroner's office may request information from you. Therefore, it is advised that you keep a log of information on hand. This might include when the warrant was faxed, delivered or picked up. Ultimately many of you already keep this information in a variety of ways. The memo was recommending this for future reference. A further suggestion is that should you undergo changes to your funeral management programs, you may wish to consider adding the features listed in the memo.

Closing Comment

Our organizations have always enjoyed an amicable working relationship. This tradition between coroners and funeral directors is long-standing, and the beneficiary is the family of the deceased, a client we both serve.

If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to call the OFSA office at 1-800-268-2727. 

Sincerely,

Dr. A.E. Lauwers
Deputy Chief Coroner

Brian Parent
OFSA