

## **PRACTICAL ADVICE TO HELP YOU CARRY OUT A CREMATION YOURSELF in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames**

### **It is often assumed that funerals can only be completed by using a Funeral Director.**

Although a funeral director will be invited to organise the majority of funerals, some people prefer to make the arrangements themselves. As we have adopted the Charter for the Bereaved we are committed to helping you arrange a funeral of your choice. If you would like to arrange a cremation yourself, this leaflet provides some guidance. We recognise that everyone is an individual and we welcome you to come and discuss your personal requirements with us.

### **LAYING OUT THE BODY**

#### **At home**

The body should be laid out as soon as possible after the death. Laying out is done by washing the body, stopping the natural orifices with cotton wool and cloth, and dressing the deceased. The head can be supported by a pillow, eyelids closed, the jaw supported and the arms and feet straightened. The deceased's general appearance can be tidied, for example: false teeth put in place, hair brushed or face shaved. When the deceased is to be left unattended you may wish to cover the face with a handkerchief or similar.

You can ask a funeral director to come to take the body away, or to lay it out at home. They can charge for this service. The room in which the body is being kept should be cool and airy.

#### **In a hospital**

The hospital will usually carry out the laying out of the body and then take it to the mortuary. You have a common law right as executor or administrator to be given care of the deceased. You will need to telephone (usually the Patient Affairs or Bereavement Office) to arrange a suitable time to attend the mortuary.

### **PURCHASING OR MAKING A COFFIN**

Coffins can be made from traditional woods, biodegradable material, wicker, bamboo, cardboard or a cloth burial shroud with supporting board. Alternatively you may wish to make the coffin yourself. If you wish to paint the coffin please use water based paint. There are many different coffin suppliers and the Crematorium Office can provide you with an information sheet on how to make a coffin or where a coffin or alternative can be purchased. The outside measurements of the coffin can be no larger than **84" x 30" x 27"**, (length, width & height). It is essential that the coffin base is smooth and rigid to allow us to place the coffin safely and reverently into the cremator. Please ask for copies of 'Instructions to Funeral Directors' & our environmental guidance note to help us help you comply with environmental law.

### **TRANSPORTATION OF COFFIN**

You will need to consider how you will transport the coffin from the house or hospital to the crematorium. Vehicles that have been used are an estate car, transit van, hired traditional hearse or a horse-drawn hearse. If you wish the deceased may be brought into the care of the crematorium early in the morning on the day of the funeral. Please let us know in advance.

## **REGISTERING THE DEATH**

The law requires that every death in this country be registered. The doctor, who was looking after the deceased, or the coroner, will issue a medical certificate that states the cause of death. There is no charge for this certificate. The doctor will usually give this to the next of kin to enable them to register the death. In this country, deaths should be registered within five days of the death. The death must be registered in the area the death occurred. For example if the death occurred at Kingston Hospital, the death would be registered at Kingston Registry Office.

You may contact the Registrars Office to check their opening times, or if you have any queries. You will usually have to go in person to the office to register the death, ensuring you have the medical certificate of cause of death with you. Once the registration has been completed, the Registrar can issue a copy of the entry in the register - this is often referred to as the Death Certificate. You may need to purchase a few copies of the Death Certificate to enable you to deal with closing bank accounts, apply for probate etc.

## **REGISTRARS AND CORONERS CERTIFICATES**

The Registrar, once the death has been registered, will issue a certificate, which authorises a burial or cremation to take place. This is generally referred to as the "green certificate" or "disposal certificate". We cannot allow a burial or cremation unless we have received this certificate. The certificate is free of charge. If the death has been referred to the Coroner, it cannot be registered until the Registrar has received authority from the Coroner. If there is no inquest the Coroner may issue a "Pink Form" (Form 100) which gives the cause of death so that registration can take place. The Form may be sent directly to the Registrars or you may be asked to deliver it. If a post-mortem examination has been made, the cause of death certified by the Coroner and also where an inquest has been opened the Coroner will issue a Form 6, Certificate for Cremation. This takes the place of the Registrars "Green Certificate" and the two medical certificates explained below.

## **BOOKING AN APPOINTMENT**

You will need to make an appointment for a service time. The office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm. Services at the crematorium are arranged at 40 minutes intervals beginning at 9.00am and weekend services are available. Please note that the service time allows for entry & exit of approximately 5 minutes, 10 minutes in all, with seated time of 30 minutes. This helps us prepare the chapel for the following service. For large or extended services please secure an additional service time.

When making funeral arrangements please allow sufficient time to obtain the statutory forms required (explained below). A period of 3 days is usual, if a death has to be reported to the Coroner or occurs over a public holiday then more time may be required. However we will need the forms at the office by 9.00am at least one working day prior to the proposed cremation service. It is strongly recommended that you visit the office (a home visit can be arranged within the Borough if necessary) to make your provisional arrangements so that staff can provide you with appropriate guidance.

## **PRELIMINARY APPLICATION FOR CREMATION**

This confirms your appointment and provides details of the type of service you wish us to provide and your instructions for care of the cremated remains.

## **APPLICATION FOR CREMATION**

This is known as Form 1 and must be completed by the nearest surviving relative or executor. If not possible a reason why someone else has applied must be given.

## **MEDICAL CERTIFICATES**

If a Coroners Certificate for Cremation has not been issued then two Medical Certificates will be required. These are known as Forms 4 (Certificate of Medical Attendant) and Form 5 (Confirmatory Certificate). You must notify the doctor who attended the deceased before death, at home or hospital, that a cremation is required. The doctor will then complete Form 4 and arrange for another doctor to complete Form 5. If a hospital post-mortem has been made and the results are known to the doctor who attended the deceased before death then only Form 4 will be required. There is a fee for each certificate which you must pay to the doctor or hospital. The certificate(s) in a sealed envelope must be delivered to the crematorium office.

## **AUTHORITY TO CREMATE**

Usually incorporated on the reverse of the Medical Certificates and known as Form 10. We will arrange for this to be signed by the Medical Referee whom visits the crematorium to inspect all documentation and without whose written consent a cremation cannot take place.

## **AT THE CREMATORIUM**

You will have arranged a time with the crematorium for the service. When you arrive at the crematorium at this pre-arranged time, a member of staff will meet you at the entrance of the crematorium. There is a private car park adjacent to the crematorium for relatives and friends and a waiting room and disabled toilet is provided. The member of staff is there to assist and guide you, and also to ensure the service takes place correctly.

### **Service in chapel**

If you wish you are welcome to hold a funeral service in our chapel. Those of varied faiths and cultures use the chapel. The chapel has a resident organist; music facilities and if you prefer live music (not organ) then you are welcome to make alternative arrangements. You can place personal items in the chapel, for example scented candles or balloons. Staff will be pleased to show you the chapel when you begin to make your arrangements. The chapel has a central catafalque upon which a coffin is placed in order to descend to the care of our staff. You may choose to leave the coffin on view until you have exited the chapel or you may wish to place the coffin on trestles for a more informal service. Please ensure this instruction is made clear when making the cremation booking.

It is often assumed, wrongly, that you must have a Minister to officiate at a cremation service. The service can be taken by anyone of your choice, for example a representative of your faith, by friends and family or you can hold a silent service.

### **Carrying the coffin**

You will need to have at least four people to assist you at the crematorium. They will need to be able to take the coffin from the vehicle or trestles, and to place the coffin onto the catafalque. The crematorium can provide a wheeled bier if required and a member of staff will be with you to offer advice and guidance.

## **AFTER THE SERVICE**

Unless otherwise requested, staff will place any floral tributes to a name stand within the general vicinity of the cloisters. Flowers will be left for five days and before disposal tribute cards will be removed.

As previously mentioned, this leaflet includes some guidelines. We recognise everyone is an individual and we will help you to make the funeral you are arranging as personal and individual as you wish.

## **FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Where this information has not been obtained prior to a death, you are welcome to use the copies available for reference in the Crematorium Office.

- Questions People Ask About Cremation
- The Natural Death Handbook.
- What to do when someone dies.
- The DIY Guide to Law and Practice.
- Dead Good Funerals Book.
- Funerals: a Guide

The following publications are available from the Crematorium Office. Useful addresses and Web sites

- Charter for the Bereaved leaflet
- Cemetery Fees and charges
- Hymns
- Coffin Suppliers
- Example of a Service Sheet

Frequently used registrars are listed below:

### **Kingston Registry Office**

35 Coombe Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7BA.

Telephone: 020 8546 0920.

### **Richmond Registry Office**

1 Spring Terrace, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1LW.

Telephone: 020 8940 2651

### **Hounslow Registry Office**

88 Lampton Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 4DW.

Fulham Registry Office

553/561 Fulham Road, London, SW6 1ET.

Telephone: 020 8583 2089

### **Weybridge Registry Office**

Rylston, 81 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9LN.

Telephone: 01932 254360