



Standards

Funeral Directors' Association Standards

September 2020

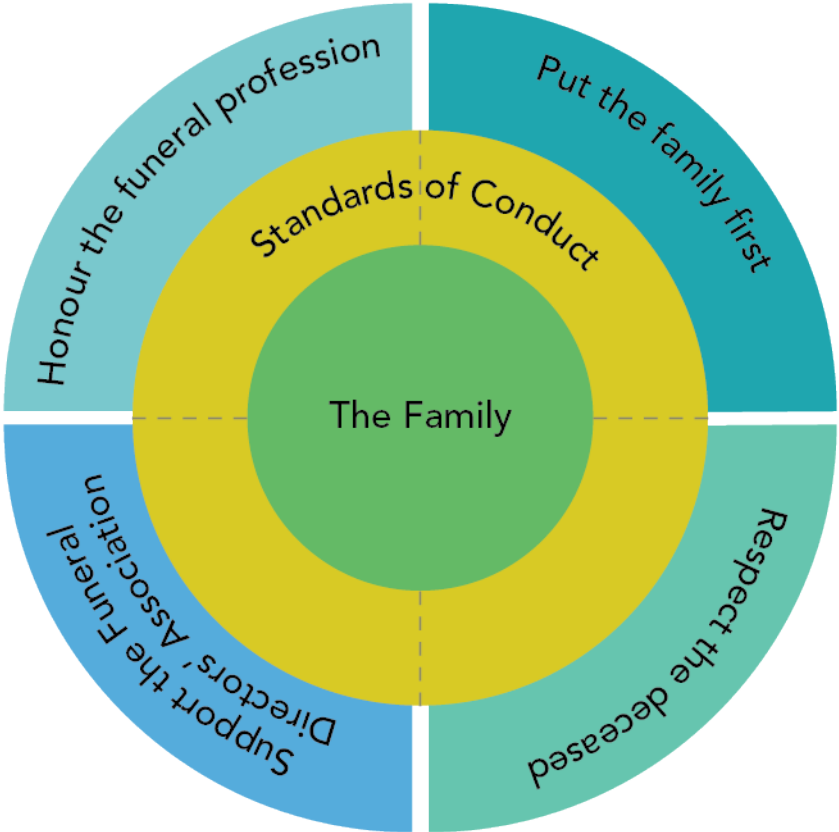
FUNERAL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION STANDARDS

Members of the Funeral Directors' Association are guided by the following Membership Standards. The Membership Standards seek to ensure that every person receives a dignified and respectful funeral for their loved ones.

The Standards include Ethical Principles and Standards of Conduct.

- **Ethical Principles** are principles that every member and their employees should strive to achieve and uphold in all that they do. They serve as the justification for the specific requirements in the Standards of Conduct.
- **Standards of Conduct** establish conduct which is required/prohibited by members and their employees. Standards are binding on members.

In these Membership Standards 'member' refers to member firms of the Funeral Directors' Association. Every member and its employees have a duty to familiarise themselves with the Standards and strive to uphold them.



VALUES

The Funeral Directors' Association and their members are guided by the following qualities: genuine, integrity, respect, wisdom, collaboration, leadership, confidentiality, making a difference, communication and transparency.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

1. PUT THE FAMILY FIRST

Members and their employees have an obligation to listen to client families and provide them with the best possible service within the client family's means. They are to serve the client family with an informed understanding of the bereavement process and do what they reasonably can to meet the client family's needs. Members and their employees shall act with good taste and dignity in all matters.

2. RESPECT THE DECEASED

Members and their employees have an obligation to treat the deceased with respect and dignity during all stages of care (transfer, transport, preparation, storage, and disposition).

3. SUPPORT THE FUNERAL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Members and their employees will show support for the Funeral Directors' Association, its aims and objectives; be active in its work; and make every effort to assist the development and progress of the profession and the Association.

4. HONOUR THE FUNERAL PROFESSION

Members have an obligation to the public to provide a quality service that can be relied on and trusted in times of need. Members and their employees should act honestly, provide competent personnel and quality facilities to maintain public confidence in the industry.

1. PUT THE FAMILY FIRST

Ethical Principle:

Members and their employees have an obligation to listen to client families and provide them with the best possible service within the client family's means. They are to serve the client family with an informed understanding of the bereavement process and do what they reasonably can to meet the client family's needs. Members and their employees shall act with good taste and dignity in all matters.

Standards of Conduct:

1. *Act professionally*

Members and their employees must serve client families in a **professional, competent, and caring** manner. They will not engage in any **conduct** that is likely to deceive, mislead or harm the client families they serve.

2. *Non-discriminatory*

Members and their employees must **not discriminate** against any client family based on religion, race, colour, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability, employment status, relationship status or political opinion.

3. *Transparency of services*

Members and their employees must be **transparent** and advise client families of the **range of services** they can or cannot provide.

4. *Informed decision-making*

Members and their employees will **not pressurise** or **exploit** client families following a bereavement and will provide client families with adequate time to make an **informed decision** regarding funeral arrangements.

5. *Written estimate*

Members and their employees must provide client families with a **written estimate** of all charges and other related costs to be made on the client family's behalf at the time of taking instructions, or as soon as is practicable thereafter.

Members and their employees must be able to detail the costs of funeral products, services, and facilities and must make it clear that the client family has signed and accepted responsibility for the estimate.

6. *Written contractual agreement*

Members and their employees must provide a written agreement setting out the **contractual obligations** and responsibilities of both parties at the time of taking instructions, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

All communications must be in clear and **plain language**.

7. *Prepaid funeral monies*

All members' **prepaid funeral monies** must be held:

- a. In the Funeral Directors' Association Pre-Paid Funeral Trust; or
- b. By a Trustee Corporation (as defined in the Trusts Act 2019); or
- c. In a Trust Account which meets the requirements of all relevant legislation and has been approved by the Funeral Directors' Association Board.

8. *Confidentiality*

Members and their employees must protect the **confidential** nature of the information given to them. They will not divulge information regarding the deceased except as required by law.

9. *Soliciting business*

Members and their employees will not initiate contact with bereaved families with a view to **soliciting business**. The bereaved family may not be approached by the funeral director or any of their representatives when the family has not asked for or engaged their services.

General marketing directed to the public at large will not constitute a violation of this standard.

2. RESPECT THE DECEASED

Ethical Principle:

Members and their employees have an obligation to treat the deceased with respect and dignity during all stages of care (transfer, transport, preparation, storage, and disposition).

Standards of Conduct:

1. *Transfers*

The **transfer** of the deceased must be carried out with care and in a manner that maintains a standard of decency and hygiene.

Where the transfer of the deceased to a mortuary is performed at the request of an outside agency, the funeral director will await further instructions and will not in any way make the first approach to the deceased's next of kin.

2. *Transport*

All **transport** of the deceased must be in a discrete and dignified manner, using vehicles and equipment that are fit for this purpose. The vehicle used to transfer must be clean, well maintained and conceal the deceased's body. The equipment used must also be suitable and well maintained.

Handling and transportation of the deceased must comply with the Health (Burial) Regulations 1946.

3. *Custodial role*

When members and their employees come into possession of **personal items** that accompany the deceased, they must ensure the items are stored and cared for in a secure way and that a written record describing the items is kept.

The family must be informed of the items held, and these items may only be uplifted by an authorised person. A **record of items** uplifted must be kept including details of the authorised person uplifting and their signature.

4. *Storage and preparation room*

Members and their employees must ensure that deceased persons are **accommodated** in a discrete area that is not readily accessible to the public and where access is restricted to authorised personnel.

Members must have a **storage facility** that meets all relevant legislative requirements and provides respect and dignity to the deceased.

In the **preparation room** the deceased shall always be respectfully covered when preparation is not in progress, or when no staff are in the preparation area. The deceased shall be prepared to ensure an acceptable and safe standard of hygiene, and shall be carried out by, or under the supervision of, a duly authorised person.

All storage and preparation facilities must comply with the Health (Burial) Regulations 1946.

5. *Preparation of the deceased*

If a client family wishes the deceased to be embalmed, or for other preparation methods to be employed, members and their employees must ensure they have permission from the client family to complete this **preparation**. Where specific preparation options are expressly declined, members and their employees will seek a signed indemnity from the client family.

Members and their employees must provide preparation options to client families and make these options clear. The preparation options could include options they do not provide but have access to, such as temperature-controlled environments, or embalming services.

Any preparation facilities must be clean and appropriate for purpose.

Whenever the deceased is to be transported any distance by another agency, it is recommended that transport preparation has been undertaken.

6. *Viewing the deceased*

The funeral director must be able to facilitate the private **viewing of the deceased** to the client family as a service. Due regard must be given to the requests made by the client family (for example make-up, having the coffin open). Any additional costs required in viewing the deceased must be communicated with the client family.

Viewing areas must be fit-for-purpose, private, clean, and well maintained. When client families are paying their respect to the deceased, they shall be afforded quiet privacy.

7. *Casket*

The **casket** will be prepared so that it could be opened at any time for inspection, demonstrating care and respect for the deceased and meeting the terms of the Health (Burial) Regulations 1946. This includes taking all reasonable care so that any liquid or gaseous products of decomposition cannot escape and cause distress.

8. *Crematorium*

Members having control or management of a **crematorium** must:

- a. Comply with relevant legislation; and
- b. Have in place a set of protocols and procedures for the operation of the cremator; and
- c. Control who may attend cremations and the conduct of persons attending such cremations; and
- d. Keep a register of cremations.

9. *Ashes*

Members must have a **written ashes management policy** in place. The ashes management policy must require that members maintain a register for the collection, storage and return of ashes, including details of the identified authorised person uplifting the ashes and their signature.

The policy should require that ashes be stored in a designated, locked, clean and dry area, and that ashes and the cremation certificate be stored together. It should also provide a clear description of options available to the client family (e.g. scattering, urn, etc), and procedures for reporting/ storing/ releasing ashes.

10. *Records*

Members must keep **records** of the deceased in their care. Members must keep records to enable:

- a. The member to demonstrate they have met relevant legislative requirements; and
- b. To demonstrate that they have followed client family instruction; and
- c. To demonstrate they have treated the deceased with due care and respect.

3. SUPPORT THE FUNERAL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Ethical Principle:

Members and their employees will show support to the Funeral Directors' Association, its aims and objectives; be active in its work; and make every effort to assist the development and progress of the profession and the Association.

Standards of Conduct:

1. *Engagement*

Members and their employees have an obligation to **support and engage** with the Funeral Directors' Association in its vision to create a New Zealand where meaningful funerals are valued as an essential part of healthy grieving.

Members and their employees must endeavour to **support colleagues** professionally. They will willingly share within the Association the benefits of their experience and will conduct their business so as to avoid controversy.

Members should be represented at all District and National Association **meetings** where possible.

2. *Education*

All members and their employees have an obligation to continue with ongoing **education** and professional development.

Members shall ensure that employees are provided initial and ongoing guidance and **training**. They shall also ensure that all employees are familiar with the workings of these standards.

3. *Representing the Funeral Directors' Association*

Members must prominently **display**, in a public area of their premises, the **ethical principles** listed in this standard, and have these on their **website** or a link to these on the Funeral Directors' Association website.

Members must **not speak on behalf** of the Association or give the impression that they have the authority to do so unless they have been expressly authorised by the Association. Members must also refrain from public announcements that may bring criticism to the profession and fellow members.

4. *Facilities*

Members must offer access to a mortuary or holding room, a viewing room, a work/storage area, a hearse, an office/interview room.

Each of these **facilities** is subject to a **periodic inspection** by the Funeral Directors' Association.

5. *Compliance*

Members and their employees must **comply** with these Membership Standards.

4. HONOUR THE FUNERAL PROFESSION

Ethical Principle:

Members have an obligation to the public to provide a quality service that can be relied on and trusted in times of need. Members and their employees should act honestly, provide competent personnel and quality facilities to maintain public confidence in the industry.

Standards of Conduct:

1. *Act lawfully*

Members and their employees must be conversant with the **relevant laws** and abide by them. They must not take part in any improper practice or **unlawful conduct** which is likely to bring disrepute to the profession. This includes not operating whilst under controlled substances such as drugs and alcohol.

2. *Advertisements*

Any **advertisements** must be dignified and in good taste. Any third-party endorsements must be authentic and specifically approved by that third party. Members shall not engage in any false or misleading advertising.

3. *Attire*

All members shall have a policy to ensure their employees are suitably **attired**.

4. *Other funeral homes*

Members and their employees will always **deal fairly and honestly** and will not intentionally injure the professional reputation or practice of another funeral director, whether a member or not.

If two funeral homes are **called by the same family** in error, both must show a willingness to withdraw and allow the family to decide.

5. *Record keeping*

Members must have efficient and effective **record-keeping** and management processes in place.