



AUSTRALASIAN
CEMETERIES & CREMATORIA
ASSOCIATION

THE USE OF CARDBOARD AND OTHER RECEPTACLES

November 2004

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Introduction

The guidelines are provided to assist ACCA members in the conduct of their operations.

From time to time inquiries are received about the necessary specifications for cardboard (or other) receptacles to be used for cremation. These guidelines do not purport to be manufacturing specifications.

Their objective is to

- diminish the likelihood of product failure
- reduce OH&S risk to crematoria staff during the conduct of funeral services
- at the crematorium
- limit prospective psychological disamenity during the conduct of the funeral
- provide an ongoing basis upon which ACCA Members may objectively
- decide whether or not to accept a proposed receptacle

It is recommended that the following criteria be applied by crematoria:

1. The receptacle must:

- a. contain a solid base made of wood, composite board or other equivalent suitable combustible material to facilitate storage and handling e.g. transfer between vehicles, upon roller trolleys, charge biers, placement on catafalques etc
- b. be impervious to rain
- c. be constructed in such a manner that:
 - i) distortion does not occur during handling or transportation
 - ii) joints in the receptacle do not come apart
 - iii) when the receptacle is secured within the vehicle that the "coffin stop" or other engaged safety fixing mechanism does not collapse or bend or distort the receptacle
- d. be able to withstand the rigours of being carried/handled by untrained persons e.g. mourners, during the normal conduct of the funeral
- e. have internal dimensions that exceed the measurements of the deceased
- f. have external dimensions limited to a size acceptable for cremation

2. The receptacle lid must:

- a. be secured in a manner which prevents release during handling and transportation
- b. have a suitable name plate attached, bearing the full name of the deceased

3. To evaluate the suitability of a proposed receptacle and to minimise the likelihood of disruption to the actual conduct of the funeral and related inconvenience to the family, the crematorium may require an empty receptacle be delivered:

- a. to it for inspection on a normal working day prior to the cremation
- b. or to a nominated testing authority e.g. in NSW there is a requirement that Testsafe, an accredited testing authority, issue certification

4. In the event that the receptacle is deemed unacceptable or is not made available in a manner allowing suitable appraisal to occur, the crematorium need not accept it

5. To diminish the likelihood of failure it is recommended that:

- a. the body of the deceased should only be transferred into the receptacle immediately prior to transportation for disposition or the conduct of the funeral
- b. floral tributes being placed upon the receptacle should be constructed in such a manner that their weight, moisture content etc. do not diminish the performance of the receptacle top
- c. unless there is appropriate testing clarification to indicate that:
 - i) the receptacle has a higher load bearing capacity, then the total combined weight of the receptacle and its contents must not exceed 100kg
 - ii) storage in cooled or refrigerated areas e.g. mortuaries or crematoria holding areas, does not diminish performance, then the receptacle should not be stored in such areas

6. Acknowledging the temperatures at which cremation chambers operate and the exposure of the receptacle to radiated heat, just prior to charging, testing should occur to ensure that the pre-ignition of the receptacle and related flashback do not pose an unacceptable risk to staff or the integrity of the charging process.

7. Body.Bag:

- a. the deceased must be secured within an opaque body bag which is impervious to liquids and odours
- b. the body bag must be at least a 100um thick and made of material deemed acceptable for cremation
- c. the bag is to be secured in such a way that during transport and handling it prevents:
 - i. movement of the deceased
 - ii. damage or distortion of the receptacle shell

8. Recognising the perceived potential handling and health risks, relative to more traditional coffins & coffins, the crematoria may require that funeral directing staff:

- a. place the receptacle in whatever position is required for the conduct of the service or the actual disposition
- b. remain on site at the crematoria until the charging of the cremator is successfully completed

9. Promotional references:

- a. compliance with these guidelines must not be used for advertising purposes
- b. any other implied or explicit reference to ACCA or state association, without express written authority from its Board, must not appear on any corporate material, plans or advertising material of any kind.

In issuing these guidelines, the ACCA Board reserves the right to revoke or vary any of the above if it becomes apparent that these guidelines are:

- do not ensure that receptacles are able to adequately perform their function
- are seen to be prejudicial to public and environmental health

Ultimately compliance of a particular product or funeral director with these guidelines does not necessarily guarantee that all crematoria will accept them.

Further Information

Cemetery and crematoria authorities who are members of ACCA are able to provide further information on these guidelines and associated matters. Similarly, the Head office of ACCA is available to assist organisations and individuals seeking further detail or contacts.

The Guidelines for the Rights of the Deceased and Bereaved will be reviewed regularly, to reflect changes in practices and legislation.

Please direct comments in relation to the Guideline to the Head office of ACCA.

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