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The Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts
Created August 1, 1907

Sam Brownback, Governor

Friday, August 19, 2016

Dear Funeral Director.

As you know our profession is capable of providing a very valuable service to society and we need to do all that we can to raise the bar of service to its highest level. We are working with families at one of the most stressful and difficult moments in their lives. It is because of this stress that poor communications can occur during the arrangement period which can lead to misunderstandings and often results in families filing complaints with the Board of Mortuary Arts.

I am writing to you, at this time, because we have seen a SHARP INCREASE in the number of complaints filed by families against Funeral Directors. For most of you, communicating in a clear, concise and sympathizing manner is simply part of doing business. However, we have found that this is not always the case. For this reason, the board wanted to take this opportunity to point out several areas that often lead to complaints filed by families and some suggestions that may assist you in avoiding a letter from us. We believe that many of these complaints can be avoided by better, more creative, communications on your part.

1. One area of concern centers around the question of who is actually considered the NEXT-OF-KIN and therefore has the responsibility to make final disposition decisions. This determination can sometimes be challenging but it is necessary that families understand that this determination has been made by the State of Kansas, and the Mortuary Arts Board is simply following the statute. It would be helpful to have a copy of this statute available in the arrangement/conference room should this question arise. K.S.A. 65-1734. (Written communication can be helpful in this situation.)

2. The arrangement process seems to have become increasingly more difficult for many reasons. These include financial issues, strained family relations, broken relationships, government regulations, time constraints, and many other considerations. Additionally, a director may be serving several families at the same time. A possible solution to consider would be to PROVIDE A LIST of any organizations, including churches or other groups, that may offer financial help or other assistance with funerals or people trained in professional counseling. Families appreciate receiving as much information as possible, preferably in writing. (Good communication is important.)

3. It goes without saying that all PRICING INFORMATION be fully explained to a family so that there are no unresolved issues surrounding a service. (Communication, communication, communication.)

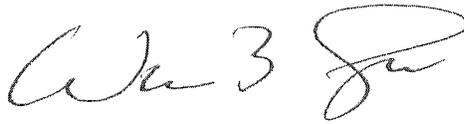
4. DEATH CERTIFICATES have been a major problem and produce the most complaints by families. As licensees, you should understand the process behind securing DC's and the importance of this document to a family. While most DC's are obtained in a timely manner, we all have experienced a problem and

have felt the frustrations of a family. Communicating with a family lets them know you are on their side and that licensees continue to represent them. It's when you fail to serve a family that a letter is generated to the board and you lose the good-will you work so hard to obtain. (Keeping an open line of communication with a family is essential.)

We have found that most complaints can be avoided by providing a thoughtful and complete explanation to a family. Many, if not most, people do not know what to expect and they look to licensees, trusting that you will help them through a difficult time. You can help a family by explaining each step in the process, from the initial notification call and removal to the arrangement period and subsequent funeral service. This communication process becomes even more important when you assist families in arranging for a CREMATION service.

As always, the Board appreciates your service to others and your contributions to our profession. Please do not hesitate to contact the Board office if you have questions or concerns. Remember timely COMMUNICATIONS with your families is the answer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wm L Cozine".

William L. Cozine, President
Kansa State Board of Mortuary Arts