



Policy statement relating to the cremation of babies and infants

This Cremation Authority wishes it to be known that it considers the interests of the bereaved family and the baby or infant left in our care to be the central focus of our attention. This will be reflected in all of our administrative and operational practices and procedures.

Definition of 'ashes'

Whilst our employees might use the terms 'ashes' and 'cremated remains' we deem these to be one and the same and defined as **'all that is left in the cremator at the end of the cremation process and following the removal of any metal'**. There might be a small number of cases where there are no ashes remaining at the end of the cremation process. If this is the case our staff will contact the Applicant for Cremation and advise them of this.

Maximising the recovery of ashes during cremation

We have developed an approach to the cremation of babies and infants that is designed to maximise the recovery of ashes. This includes the use of a cremation tray designed to retain ashes where practicable, and the maintenance of operational conditions that will minimise the loss of any ashes during the process of cremation. Please note that to allow use of the baby cremation tray the outside size of the coffin cannot exceed 35" x 15" (889mm x 380mm).

Our staff will be vigilant during the cremation process and adjust operational conditions when necessary in order to protect the ashes of babies and infants and maximise their recovery.

In any rare instance of non-recovery of ashes, we will notify the Inspector of Crematoria within 48 hours and conduct a review of the cremation process to understand why this is the case. The results of this review will be documented and will be available to next of kin and to the Inspector of Crematoria.

We will adhere to our identification procedure that guarantees that the ashes resulting from individual cremations returned to parents are those of their babies.

Shared cremations

Where a shared cremation has been authorised, and hence ashes are not individually identifiable, we will take the same care throughout the cremation process, including steps to maximise the recovery of ashes, and will scatter the ashes within the crematorium's designated area. The location will be recorded for future reference.

Disposal of ashes

In relation to the disposal of ashes in the case of a private cremation, this Cremation Authority will only act upon the written instruction of the parent who is acting as the Applicant for Cremation or other person nominated in writing by the parent.

In the case of shared cremations we will only act on the written instruction of the designated person at the relevant hospital, who is acting as the Applicant.

Ashes will be held at the crematorium for up to six weeks to await collection by representatives or instructions as to their disposal.

Where no further instructions have been received within the six week period, a further fourteen days' notice will be given in writing to the Applicant, following which the ashes will be scattered or interred within the grounds of the crematorium should no further instructions have been received.

Record-keeping

All cremations of babies and infants will be registered at the crematorium, with all information as contained in forms and certificates being retained indefinitely.

If ashes are scattered or buried within the grounds of the crematorium the final resting place will be registered. Where ashes are to be collected, the details of any person authorised by the applicant to remove/collect the ashes will be registered.

The policy of this Cremation Authority is designed to provide an audit trail from the receipt of initial funeral instructions to the final disposal of ashes, either by collection from the crematorium or by scattering or burial within the confines of the Gardens of Remembrance or other such designated area.

Further information

For more information or if you want this information in a different format or language, please contact the Bereavement Services Manager on 0303 123 1016 or email bereavement.services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Danny Maxwell
Bereavement Services Manager
South Lanarkshire Council
Bereavement Services
South Lanarkshire Crematorium
Sydes Brae
Blantyre
G72 0TL

June 2015