

Nene Valley Crematorium

Holding Over Policy

Introduction

This policy is to operate within the guidelines established by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management (ICCM) in their Charter for the Bereaved.

“Holding Over” is the retention of a coffin for a period of time after the cremation service, with the cremation taking place the following morning. The coffin will be held over within the individual crematorium building concerned overnight.

The holding over will not be a standard practice, but will only be used when required, in situations such as:

1. in the event of the mechanical failure of the cremators;
2. in the event of very low cremation numbers at a crematorium and fuel can be conserved by cremations taking place the next day;
3. in the event of complications in respect of the necessary authority to cremate (i.e. completion of paperwork by doctors / families / funeral directors). Holding over will enable a service to go ahead, without the actual cremation taking place. This will provide minimum disruption to the family.

This is not a compulsory policy in that families can choose to opt out and not agree to the holding over if that is their wish. The introduction of this policy will ensure the service can:

- Minimise its environmental impact
- Improve the working practices within the crematoria
- Have the maximum available cremation slots for families
- Be better placed to cope with mechanical breakdown
- Be more able to deal efficiently with problematic cremations

In addition to these general benefits the introduction of this policy provides additional service flexibility.

The practice of holding over is common throughout England, Scotland and Wales with guidelines issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and principles that must be adhered to, as follows:

1.0 BACKGROUND

The practice of holding over cremations is lawful and has been followed throughout England, Scotland and Wales for a number of years. Guidelines were put in place by stakeholder organisations including the ICCM following a meeting held on 17th June 2011, facilitated by the Ministry of Justice. It was determined that the following principles must be adhered to:

- 1.1 The Cremation Authority must not hold over where the Applicant for Cremation insists on the cremation being carried out on the day that the coffin is received at the crematorium and/or the service takes place.
- 1.2 Written consent must always be obtained from the Applicant or their authorised representative where the Cremation Authority practises planned holding over. The method for obtaining written consent can be decided by the Cremation Authority.
- 1.3 If holding over becomes necessary due to mechanical failure then the Cremation Authority should inform the Applicant via the funeral director and either gain consent to hold over until the fault is repaired or to allow for the cremation to take place at an alternative crematorium. If this situation occurs outside normal operating hours, then it may be considered impracticable under such circumstances to obtain the consent of the Applicant and therefore holding over should be arranged as a temporary solution.
- 1.4 The period for which a cremation may be held over is to be determined by prevailing circumstances. The crematorium must have appropriate storage conditions for holding over i.e. secure and sanitary.
- 1.5 Wellingborough Bereavement Services Ltd will strictly adhere to these guidelines.
- 1.6 There is no legal requirement for refrigerated storage with a holding over policy, as long as the cremation takes place within 72 hours.

2.0 IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THROUGH INTRODUCING THE HOLDING OVER POLICY

- 2.1 Cremation Authorities are encouraged to minimise the environmental impact of cremations where practicable to do so. Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) from fossil fuels is emitted from cremators during the cremation process. The CO₂ emissions are harmful to the environment and are their highest when a cremator is in pre-heat mode. Currently the service will utilise its cremators even if, for example, only one cremation is required on a particular day. If this policy is introduced, and there is the consent of the family, the coffin concerned will be 'held over' within the crematorium until the following day when other cremations will be taking place. Therefore this policy will ensure that the cremators are used in the most efficient and least environmentally detrimental way.

3.0 CONSENT OF THE CREMATION APPLICANT

- 3.1 It is proposed that the necessary written consent of the cremation applicant is attained at the preliminary application for cremation stage and the form accommodates the written consent of Applicants for Cremation This process will fully ensure that the necessary written consent to 'hold over' is fully adhered to for every cremation undertaken.

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