

INFANT CREMATION: CREMATION PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Introduction

This guidance relates to the single cremation of infants and babies (i.e. not shared cremations). This guidance forms part of the overarching Code of Practice for infant cremation in Scotland.

The purpose of this guidance is to set down recommendations on approaches cremation authorities should use to prevent the loss of any ashes in the cremation of an infant or child, where 'ashes' is defined as 'all that is left in the cremator at the end of the cremation process and following the removal of any metal.'

Practices for minimising the loss of ashes:

- All crematoria in Scotland should use baby trays, wherever practically possible, to minimise the loss of ashes when cremating an infant or baby. Baby trays should be of robust construction to minimise buckling and scaling in the course of use, and should enable easy collection and removal of ashes. Cremation authorities must conduct a risk assessment on the use of baby trays, and ensure staff involved in the handling of baby trays have been appropriately trained and are aware of best practice.
- Baby trays should be used in conjunction with other methods for preventing the loss of ashes, including:
 - Manufacturer pre-programmed infant settings, or equivalent manual settings, must be used to restrict or eliminate the introduction of turbulent air into the primary chamber. There should also be minimal use of the primary chamber burner in order to create the best conditions possible for the recovery of ashes. Vigilance must be maintained, with manual adjustments of air and burner made when necessary in order to minimise the potential loss of ash. Advice should be sought from manufacturers/suppliers on the use of settings, and the age/weight/size of babies and infants where such settings should no longer be used.
 - Cremation of infants and babies at the end of the day, with remains being left to cool overnight, in the same way as happens for adults is acceptable. Where remains are left to cool overnight within the cremator, automatic pre-heat settings on cremators must not be activated under any circumstances.
 - The coffin and baby tray should be placed just inside the cremator at the charge door end. Where possible the coffin and baby tray should be in view throughout cremation, so the process can be monitored.
 - In order to minimise to the loss of ashes, any ash resulting from cremation of an infant or baby should be appropriately processed, but not using a standard, adult cremulator.
- Where the above approaches are adopted it is expected that the potential for ashes to be lost will be minimised.

- Baby cremators are not considered necessary to minimise the loss of ashes, provided the other approaches recommended above are followed. Cremation Authorities are however free to use baby cremators if they so wish.

Monitoring and Assurance

- Cremation Authorities will be expected follow the above practices for all infant and baby cremations.
- No crematoria can conduct infant cremations unless crematoria staff have been specifically trained and certificated by either the Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management (ICCM) or the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA).
- In addition, all crematoria must adhere to the requirements of SEPA permits, and all crematoria will be inspected by SEPA once a year at a minimum.
- Professional guidance and training from professional membership bodies, including the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) reflects the above guidance.
- The Inspector of Crematoria will in the course of inspections of crematoria, assess compliance against these above recommendations and requirements.

References

- ICCM Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme information can be found at <http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/index.php?pagename=training>
- ICCM Policy and Guidance on the Sensitive Disposal of Fetal Remains can be found at <http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/library/FetalRemainsPolicyNOV2014ReviewFINAL.pdf>
- ICCM Baby & Infant Funerals Policy can be found at <http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/library/BabyandInfantFuneralsNovember%202014.pdf>
- FBCA “TEST” Training and Examination Scheme for Crematorium Technicians, revised October 2014 – Available to all current and future trainees registered under the FBCA training scheme,
- FBCA “A Guide to Cremation and Crematoria” Instructions to Funeral Directors,
- FBCA “A Guide to Cremation and Crematoria” Questions People Ask About Cremation.