

Introduction to Embalming

NOTICE: Effective April 1, 2016, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario assumed responsibility for the licensing and enforcement activities previously exercised by the Board of Funeral Services (BOFS) and BOFS was dissolved as a corporation. This publication remains for informational purposes. Please contact the BAO at 1-844-493-6356 or visit www.bereavementauthorityontario.ca for more information.

**INTERNSHIP
SUPPORT
PROGRAM**

In support of the internship program, the Board of Funeral Services (BOFS), in collaboration with funeral directors, has developed a process to support the introduction of the intern to the embalming process. While there are many ways to approach training an intern, the following is a proven approach that has worked successfully for many interns and preceptors.

Step 1 – Taking the First Call

The purpose of the training during Step 1 is to familiarize the intern with the process of taking the first call. Ensure the intern understands they will be dealing with callers in a fragile or emotional state which means sensitivity and compassion are needed above all. Also be sure to discuss the importance of recording accurate information and repeating details of the conversation back to the caller as necessary.

- The process for taking a first call should be outlined ahead of time, to give the intern a good sense of what to expect and why. Share an overview of the questions that may be asked.
- Review and explain what information needs to be collected from the caller. Emphasize the importance of recording accurate details and repeating information back to the caller to confirm or clarify.
- Ensure the intern understands how to properly position questions to sensitively obtain necessary details
- Discuss the importance of taking direction from the appropriate person. Provide suggestions that assist with confirming the person has legal authorization to make required decisions.
- Verify details related to the situation in an effort to be properly prepared when arriving to complete the transfer (e.g. weight of deceased, location of death, where the body is currently, etc.)
- Ask additional questions to assist with service preparations
- After the intern has completed the first call, discuss details of the conversation together and review recorded information. Be sure to take the time to answer any questions, provide feedback and offer suggestions as required
- Repeat Step 1 several times with the intern to ensure the intern is comfortable with the process and expectations.
- The intern should demonstrate the ability to effectively handle the first call and accurately record necessary information before proceeding to Step 2.

Step 2 – Performing Removals Properly

The purpose of the training during Step 2 is to familiarize the intern with the process for effectively performing removals.

- Communicate the importance of taking proper removal equipment and having adequate staff coverage to perform the removal
- Verify that the correct body is being removed from the facility. Take the time to open the body bag and checking the identification tag
- Ensure proper lifting techniques and equipment are used at all times
- Move the body from the existing location to the removal apparatus in a dignified manner
- Confirm receipt of all required documentation
- Take precautions to ensure human remains are safe and secure at all times

- Employ the use of Routine Practices
- After the removal is complete, take the time to discuss the situation. If possible, include all team members who were present in the conversation. Identify what went well and what could have been improved or enhanced. .
- The intern should be comfortable with completing all necessary requirements before proceeding to Step 3.

Step 3 – Handling Transfers Efficiently

The purpose of the training during Step 3 is to ensure the intern has a full understanding of how to effectively and efficiently handle a transfer.

- Discuss the steps that must be taken to properly transfer a body. Be sure to offer suggestions that may prove helpful and provide examples for as applicable.
- Emphasize the importance of conducting the transfer in a timely manner. Prior to leaving the funeral establishment, the intern should become familiar with the most direct route to and from the destination.
- Take the time to clean and disinfect the stretcher after the body is transferred to holding facilities
- Submit required documentation to appropriate person(s)
- Ensure body is positioned and set up in an appropriate manner until further direction is received
- Following completion of the transfer, debrief with the intern to identify what aspects were done well and where improvements could be made. During the conversation, offer the intern an opportunity to provide input, offer suggestions and ask questions.
- The intern should have a complete understanding of how to perform a transfer before proceeding to Step 4.

Step 4 – Conducting a Pre-preparational Analysis

The purpose of the pre-preparational analysis is to ensure the intern has a full understanding of the steps that need to be followed before the remains are prepared in accordance with the wishes of the legal representative.

- Ensure the intern is fully aware of the importance of preparing the remains as directed by the legal representative
- Verify the preparations that have been authorized to be performed.
- Emphasize the importance of referring to written documentation whenever possible
- Discuss procedures that need to be accomplished to achieve desired outcome (e.g. embalming or basic preparation/ non embalming)
- Offer suggestions and feedback related to the process while also providing opportunity for the intern to ask related questions.
- The intern should have a solid understanding of how to conduct a pre-preparational analysis before proceeding as authorized by the legal representative.

Embalming

- Identify the factors that are present which will impact the outcome of the embalming procedure
- Determine the appropriate method or approach. Consider chemicals, injection sites, drainage points, pressure, rate of flow and mouth closure techniques
- Provide the intern with knowledge of the equipment and instruments used in all embalming processes
- Offer suggestions and techniques to assist with the detection of good distribution of embalming fluids (e.g. traceability)
- Discuss restorative art procedures and techniques for minor restoration ensuring the intern has a reasonable understanding of the steps that may be required to address bruising and effective use of tissue builder and lip wax
- Provide proper knowledge of sanitary disposal laws and enforce the importance of compliance at all times

Basic Preparation (Non Embalming)

- Determine the proper procedure(s) that must be performed to secure dignity and respect
- Discuss various types of cosmetics and appropriate application techniques

Step 5 – Using Effective Casketing Techniques and Methods

The purpose of reviewing the procedures for casketing is to ensure the intern understands the importance of following funeral establishment protocols to maintain dignity and respect of the body through disposition.

- Employ proper techniques and methods to place the body in the casket
- Ensure the intern has adequate knowledge of the equipment that is to be used to support the process (e.g. lifts, position of casket)
- Review the monitoring method to maintain condition of the body until disposition
- Discuss appropriate presentation of the body ensuring a professional and dignified manner is upheld at all times (e.g. body must be dressed entirely)

Step 6 – Preparing Proper Documentation

The purpose of preparing proper documentation is to ensure the intern has full comprehension of how to complete *BOFS Embalming Reports* and internal and external reporting requirements. The intern must also understand the importance of taking the time necessary to be both accurate and thorough.

Additional suggestions for providing the intern opportunities to interact with families

- Following completion of the embalming process, provide the intern with constructive feedback about the process.
- Offer the intern encouragement to develop a personalized approach to embalming while maintaining funeral establishment expectations and abiding by previously identified policies.