

FEDERATION OF FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Standards (the Code) provides a proactive approach to the promotion of professional funeral services by members of the Federation of Funeral Professionals in Southern Africa (FFPSA) who, through their shared commitment to establish and uphold a professional funeral service industry, have undertaken to render their services in accordance with the ethical principles and professional conduct standards set out in this Code.

The Code is premised on the following outcomes:

- To promote and advance the reputation and credibility of the funeral profession in South Africa.
- To provide directives and guidance to FFPSA members in the rendering their services and to provide them with a competitive marketing advantage.
- To raise clients' awareness as to what may expect from a true funeral professional and to assist the public in to avoid unscrupulous funeral service providers.
- To provide Clients and the public with assurance that high standards are promoted, maintained and enforced for their benefit.

This Code is a dynamic document, and it is anticipated that as the FFPSA develops as an organisation, and as the profession as a whole matures further, that this Code will also be revised and updated in response to such development.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Code applies to all Members of the FFPSA by virtue of their membership to the FFPSA and breaches of the Code will be administered in accordance with the FFPSA's Disciplinary Regulations as determined by the FFPSA Board of Directors from time to time.

Neither the ethical principles nor the professional practice standards are exhaustive in nature. As such, the fact that a particular action or conduct is not mentioned specifically in the Code does not render it automatically acceptable and therefore, a Member may still be liable for disciplinary action.

STRUCTURE OF THE CODE

The Code comprises three sections: Ethical principles, Professional Conduct Standards and Definitions.

The Code defines seven Ethical Principles which provide Members with guidance for value-based decision-making and action in rendering their services to Clients. These principles are an important reference point for Members and should form the basis for the services that they render.

In accordance with established and trusted global standards, the FFPSA's professional conduct standards comprise directives for Members in their professional service rendering in five key areas. These embody the responsibilities and obligations that Members commit to:

- towards their Client(s);
- in the care the Deceased;
- towards the Public;
- towards their Profession; and
- towards the FFPSA

The both the Ethical Principles and the Professional Conduct Standards must be applied in the interpretation of the Code.

The Definitions provide the meaning and interpretation of key concepts found in the Code. Unless clearly inconsistent with, or otherwise indicated by the context of the Code, concepts have the meaning ascribed to them as per the definitions in the Code.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Integrity

The principle of *Integrity* requires that Members perform their work honestly, diligently, and in a responsible and professional manner whilst observing both the letter and the spirit of relevant legislation, regulation and the professional conduct standards embodied in this Code. Members

shall not knowingly be a party to any illegal activity, or engage in conduct that discredits the profession or the FFPSA and/or its Members.

2. Professionalism

The principle of *Professionalism* requires that Members behave with dignity and show respect and courtesy to Clients, fellow Members, and others in the rendering of their funeral services. Professionalism further requires Members, individually and in co-operation with their peers, to enhance and maintain the profession's reputation and public image and its ability to serve the public interest.

3. Objectivity

The principle of *Objectivity* requires Members to act with intellectual honesty and impartiality. Regardless of the services offered or the capacity in which a Member functions, objectivity requires Members to identify and manage conflicts of interest and exercise sound professional judgment in the interest of their Client. Members acknowledge that placing their Client's interests first is a core value of the funeral profession. As such, Members will not place their personal interest or advantage, in any form, before their Clients' interests.

4. Fairness

The principle of *Fairness* requires Members to provide Clients with what they are due, owed, or could reasonably expect from their engagement with the Member. Members shall disclose all material facts known to them that, if not disclosed, may distort the Client's ability to make an informed decision about the Member's services. Members shall provide information to their Clients in plain language and in a format which is accessible and understandable to the Client.

5. Competence

The principle of *Competence* requires that Members attain and maintain a high level of knowledge, skill and ability in the provision of their services. Members shall only engage in those services for which they have the necessary knowledge, skill, and experience and for which they are legally authorised. Members are commitment to continually improve their proficiency and the effectiveness and quality of their services.

6. **Confidentiality**

The principle of *Confidentiality* requires Members to protect and maintain Client and the Deceased's information in such a manner that allows access only to those who are authorised. A relationship of trust and confidence with the Client can only be built on the understanding that information will not be disclosed or used inappropriately.

7. **Diligence**

The principle of *Diligence* requires that Members fulfil the agreed upon commitments and/or services in a timely and thorough manner, by taking due care in planning, supervising and delivering services.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT STANDARDS

1. **Responsibilities and obligations towards the Client:**

In meeting their responsibilities and obligations towards their Clients, Members shall:

- (a) respect Clients' rights and abide by, and comply with, all relevant legislation and regulation pertaining to whole of their engagement with their Clients.
- (b) not unfairly discriminate against any Client(s) on the basis of, *inter alia*, religion, gender, age, race, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, or culture.
- (c) provide Clients with full and detailed information in writing and in language and a format that the Client is likely to understand, regarding the services offered, including but not limited to, product descriptions or specifications, services scope, engagement of third parties or external service providers, product and service prices, fees or charges and any other relevant information reasonable necessary for the Client to make an informed decision in the engagement of the Member.
- (d) protect confidential information pertaining to the Client(s) from unauthorised disclosure or use.
- (e) carry out all aspects of the funeral service in a competent, diligent and professional manner having due regard for the dignity, gravity and decorum of the occasion.

- (f) properly and accurately account for payment for the services and remit any money, documents, or personal property that belongs to others that comes into the Member's possession.
- (g) not engage in any unprofessional conduct likely to deceive, discredit or harm the Client(s) in the course of providing services to the Client(s).
- (h) have practical and effective processes and procedures in place for dealing with all reasonable client enquiries before, during and after the service has been completed, including an accessible and transparent complaints resolution process aligned to the FFPSA's Disciplinary Regulations.

2. Responsibilities and obligations in the care of the Deceased

In meeting their responsibilities and obligations in the care of the Deceased, Members shall:

- (a) care for each deceased person with the highest respect and dignity during the collection, transport, preparation, storage and eventual disposition of the remains, and at all other times during the rendering of services;
- (b) protect confidential information pertaining to the Deceased from unauthorised disclosure or use;
- (c) only allow authorised and qualified persons access to the remains for the purposes of transport, preparation, storage and disposition of remains and ensure that storage and preparation premises or facilities are visually and physically accessible only by authorised persons;
- (d) ensure that they attain and maintain the necessary statutory or regulatory authorisation, permits, certifications or the like, required to lawfully transport, prepare, store and dispose of remains and that transportation, preparation, storage and disposition only takes place utilising vehicles, premises, facilities and equipment which are compliant and fit for such matters;
- (e) not contravene or circumvent, any legislation, code or regulation affecting the transportation, preparation, storage or disposition of remains.

3. Responsibilities and obligations towards the Public:

In meeting their responsibilities and obligations towards the Public, Members shall:

- (a) not engage in any conduct or communicate in any manner, which is misleading or deceptive, or is likely to mislead or deceive any person in relation to any aspect of the Member's qualifications, skill, expertise, services or products;
- (b) not personally or through an agent solicit or secure, or attempt to solicit or secure, the provision of services, provided however, that general advertising directed to the public at large would not constitute a violation of this standard;
- (c) not partake in any activity or endeavour, or act or omit to act in any manner which adversely impact the Member's ability to carry out their obligation as a funeral professional;
- (d) ensure their compliance with all legislation, regulatory requirements and professional standards, and not conduct themselves or their affairs in a manner that may give rise to a civil judgment, regulatory or disciplinary action; provisional or final sequestration / liquidation, removal from an office of trust or a criminal conviction;
- (e) not knowingly or negligently expose any person to any health or environmental hazard in or about their vehicles, premises or facilities and, in the conduct of their services or provision of their products, at all times observe and ensure prudent hygiene and hazard control protocols are maintained as is suitable in such matters.

4. Responsibilities and obligations towards Profession

In meeting their responsibilities and obligations towards the Profession, Members shall:

- (a) observe both the letter and the spirit of this Code and relevant legislation and regulation so as to promote and advance the funeral profession in South Africa;
- (b) refrain from making or publishing false records, reports, registers or information pertaining to any aspect of their services or products irrespective of form or format;
- (c) generally refrain from any unconscionable or unlawful conduct, unjust terms and conditions or improper practices which is likely to cause harm or disrepute to the Profession.

5. Responsibilities and obligations towards FFPSA

In meeting their responsibilities and obligations towards the FFPSA, Members shall:

- (a) comply with the suite of FFPSA's regulations, as determined from time to time by the FFPSA;
- (b) when they are also members, affiliates or associates of another organisation, institute, regulatory or controlling body, or association, ensure adherence to such entities' rules, regulations and codes of conduct, and inform the FFPSA, at the earliest possible time, of any administrative, punitive or disciplinary action taken against them by such an entity.
- (c) comply with the FFPSA requirements in using the FFPSA's name, logo(s) and professional member designations;
- (d) not directly or indirectly disrupt or discredit the FFPSA's in its activities and initiatives to promote and advance the funeral profession in South Africa
- (e) not misstate any authority to represent the FFPSA and not write, speak or act in such a way as to lead others to believe that they are officially representing the FFPSA, unless they have been duly authorised to do so by an authorised representative of the FFPSA.

DEFINITIONS

- Client:** shall mean a person or persons, excluding the general public, who engages a Member for the provision of funeral services. For the purposes of this definition, a Member is deemed engaged by a Client when, based on the relevant facts and circumstances, the person reasonably relies on information or services provided by such Member.
- Disciplinary Regulations:** shall mean the FFPSA's Disciplinary Regulations, as determined from time to time.
- Disposition:** shall mean cremation or burial of the deceased's remains, or any other appropriate means which produces a comparable result. .
- FFPSA:** means the Federation of Funeral Professionals in Southern Africa.
- FFPSA regulations:** means all the rules, policies, regulations and similar documentation established under or through FFPSA's Memorandum of Incorporation or through a decision of the FFPSA Board of Directors and shall include, but not be limited to, regulations relating to membership, professional designations, member conduct and disciplinary procedures, continuing professional development and the like, as determined from time to time.
- Funeral service(s):** shall, without derogating from the generality of the term, mean to conduct activities related and interrelated to any arrangements and/or the transportation, preparation, storage and disposition of a deceased and for the purposes of this Code "service"/ "services" shall have a similar meaning.
- Member(s):** means a Member of the FFPSA, irrespective of their category of membership, affiliation or professional designation
- Preparation:** shall mean to include all activities in connection with the care and readying of remains for eventual disposition and "prepare" shall have a similar meaning.

Products: shall without derogating from the generality of the term, mean products offered to Clients as part of, or in connection with, the funeral services and shall include, but not be limited to, coffins or caskets, coffin or casket components, urns and containers, tombstones, grave-site equipment, vehicles and hearses, wreaths and flowers, printed materials, food and beverages, catering and event equipment.

Storage: shall mean the storage of remains in anticipation of disposition

Transportation: shall mean to include, but not be limited to, the collection of the deceased from their place of death and subsequent transfers to a mortuary, burial site or crematorium, or for repatriation, and shall include all actions in transit.