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March 19, 2020

State and Local Health Departments  
Funeral, Cemetery, and Cremation Regulatory Agencies

Re: Inclusion of Deathcare Professionals in All COVID-19 Orders

On behalf of ICCFA Members,

In light of many Health Departments, State and other local agencies issuing various orders ranging from size restrictions of public gatherings all the way to shelter-in-place orders, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCF A) is requesting that all orders include deathcare professionals as essential business.

Currently, most orders are identifying that only essential activities and businesses to be open. Included in these orders are health care operations as well as other businesses related to general health and essential infrastructure. ICCFA believes all deathcare professionals - this would include funeral homes, crematories, cemeteries, as well as the suppliers to these businesses - are related and essential infrastructure. We encourage any new orders to specifically identify the deathcare professions as an essential business and function. By clarifying that deathcare professionals are an essential business and function, it will avoid any confusion.

Properly identifying deathcare professionals will allow them to remain in a position to aid in this crisis. It is also important so they can receive needed supplies, and also have priority access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as this crisis continues. Identifying deathcare professionals as essential public health workers also follows a recent Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response, which was issued by the US Department of Homeland Security on March 19, 2020. ( <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce> )

ICCF A suggests the use of the following language in any orders:

For the purposes of this Order, "Essential Businesses" means:  
*Deathcare Professionals and Essential Infrastructure, including licensed funeral homes, crematories, cemeteries, as well as all suppliers of funeral products to funeral service providers, which provide essential services that are critical to the health, safety and sanitation of the community.*

If you have any questions, please contact us at (703) 391-8400.

Sincerely,

Nadira Baddeliyanage  
Executive Director, ICCFA

Poul Lemasters  
General Counsel, ICCFA

*Founded in 1887, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association is the only international trade association representing all segments of the cemetery, cremation, funeral and memorialization profession. Its membership is composed of more than 9,100 rooftop locations and 18,000 professionals in the cemetery, funeral home and crematory industries, as well as supplier and related businesses worldwide.*