

# DEFINITIONS AND STANDARDS

## for the Cremation of Companion Animals

### Definitions/Terminology

**Private cremation:** A cremation procedure during which only one animal's body is present in the cremation unit during the cremation process.

**Partitioned cremation:** A cremation procedure during which more than one pet's body is present in the cremation chamber and the cremated remains of specific pets are to be returned. Due to a number of factors and by virtue of multiple pets being cremated within the same unit at the same time, active commingling of cremated remains will occur.

**Communal cremation:** A cremation procedure where multiple animals are cremated together without any form of separation. These commingled cremated remains are not returned to owners.

**Cremation process:** The heating process that reduces human or animal remains to bone fragments, followed by the processing that reduces bone fragments to unidentifiable dimensions.

**Commingling:** Mixing of cremated remains.

- **Active Commingling:** Commingling that occurs between animals during the cremation and/or retrieval process when multiple animals are cremated together at the same time.

This type of comingling can be minimized with effective partitioning but it is impossible to assert that it can be eliminated entirely. This type of comingling cannot, by definition, occur with a private cremation.

- **Residual (Incidental) Commingling:** Unavoidable incidental comingling between cremations that occurs despite a best effort to recover all cremains from each cremation. This will occur to varying degrees with any type of cremation. This definition is the minimal type of comingling that occurs even in cremations performed in succession. (human cremations and private pet cremations).

*For the proposed definitions below, state definitions and regulations may preclude members from treating anatomical pet remains as anything other than medical waste. Please check with your state EPA.*

**Anatomical Pet Remains:** A portion of pet's remains not discarded as medical waste, but for which reverent cremation is desired for that body part, (i.e. an extremity or necropsied head.) and for which reverent disposition is not otherwise forbidden by law.

**Medical Waste:** Waste derived from the medical treatment of humans, or animals, or from biological research.

## Standards for Cremation Procedures

### Single Pet “One at a Time” Cremation Procedures

#### *Private Cremation*

Any cremation procedure deemed “Private” must be performed with only one pet’s body or cremated remains in the cremation unit during the cremation process. Only “one pet at a time” will be cremated when a Private Cremation is performed.

All retrievable cremated remains should be collected from each cremation prior to placing the next animal’s body in the cremation unit.

Operators may not use the word “Private” in the title or description of any service in which more than one animal is cremated in any part of a single cremation unit at the same time. (i.e., “Semi-Private,” “Privately Partitioned,” are not acceptable).

It is the PLPA’s position that any company using the words “Private” or “Individual” in the definition and/or description of their cremation processes be expected to perform the procedure in the same manner as private cremations are performed by PLPA members.



### Multiple Pet Cremation Procedures

#### *Partitioned Cremation*

PLPA members will be expected to follow strict guidelines when/if performing this sort of cremation procedure. Full disclosure is expected from membership. The words “private” and/or “individual” are not to be used in whole or in part in the description and/or definition of this type of procedure.

At the very least, some contiguous method of effective physical separation not just space—should be employed in order to keep commingling to a minimum. Commingling of cremated remains will occur with this type of cremation and will vary based upon conditions in the cremation chamber, height and type of the partitioning medium used, amount of space between animals, method of retrieval employed, and other factors.

#### *Communal Cremation*

While allowing for some practical considerations at the discretion of the PLPA member, PLPA membership will be expected to treat the bodies of pets designated for communal cremation with respect and dignity at all times possible. This primarily includes, but is not limited to:

- Completing the cremation expeditiously if cold storage is not available.

- Minimizing or eliminating any amount of rough-handling of animals.

The final disposition of the cremated remains is to be disclosed to clients, but these cremated remains are not to be returned to clients in whole or in part. Unless otherwise prohibited in an operator's jurisdiction, the PLPA recommends dignified disposition of the cremated remains, such as scattering or interment in a location that families may visit. Cremated remains of companion animals should not be disposed of in the garbage or land fill unless doing so is required by law of that jurisdiction. Operators should also disclose what the final disposition area is for the consumer.

#### *Family Cremation*

A special type of multiple-pet cremation procedure performed at the request of a single owner or family during which pets from the same family, and only pets from the same family, are cremated together.



## **The PLPA Mission Statement**

The Pet Loss Professionals Alliance is committed to being an educational resource to its members. The membership, including pet loss suppliers and pet death care facility operators, will be dedicated to the respectful and dignified treatment of those pets entrusted to us. We will do this through the creation of programs to profitably meet the changing needs of the pet death care industry and our process partners in the areas of cemeteries, crematories and pet loss facilities, as well as the creation of standards to willfully meet our customers' expectations.

**"If there is a heaven, it's certain our animals are to be there. Their lives become so interwoven with our own, it would take more than an arch angel to detangle them."**

**—Pam Brown**