Funeral Home Worker Safety Meeting Kit



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN FUNERAL HOMES – HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

It is necessary to have a Health and Safety Plan in which the possible risks of the funeral home activity are determined, the safety measures necessary to prevent accidents and a periodic evaluation and review of the same.

COMMON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS IN A FUNERAL HOME

- The main occupational hazards in funeral homes, cemeteries and transport of corpses are mainly physical:
- Falls on the same level due to tripping or slipping
- Falls to a different level
- Falling objects due to collapsing
- Falling objects while being handled
- Collisions and blows against immobile objects
- Collisions and blows against moving objects
- Cuts
- Electrical contacts
- Traffic accidents and accidents with vehicles- Vibrations (cemetery workers)

Measures to avoid accidents, illnesses and occupational hazards in funeral homes.

- Correct handling of loads with appropriate transport and lifting media.
- Delimiting the circulation area of stretchers and caskets.
- Securing the wheels of stretchers and casket transport tables.
- Secure shelves and other particularly heavy items.
- Remove dirt and obstructions and keep the working space clean, well lit and ventilated.
- Marking the obstacles and appropriate footwear for the activity.
- Ensure compliance with preventive measures to avoid fatigue, the main cause of car accidents: rest at least seven hours before a long journey, check the condition of the vehicle, rest every two hours during the journey, keep

the car’s interior ventilated, hydrate frequently and avoid, as far as possible, journeys at night or in high temperatures.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS

Psychosocial risks in funeral homes include all those situations or working conditions that have a **high probability of affecting the physical and mental health** of workers: stress, burnout syndrome, technostress, mental fatigue, violence and harassment at work or sexual harassment are some of the main psychosocial risks that can appear at work.

Funeral home workers are in continuous contact with death. Despite this, they must convey serenity, empathy and stability. This control of emotions can lead to an overload of workers. In addition, they sometimes have to deal with the treatment of mutilated, disfigured or decomposing human remains, which is undoubtedly a psychosocial risk that should not be overlooked.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THANATOPRAXY

Thanatopraxy services present occupational hazards for funeral homes arising from the handling of corpses, including exposure to biological agents caused by viruses, parasites and fungi, bacteria and/or prions.

The main health and safety measures to avoid occupational hazards in thanatopraxy, are the following.

Work organisation

- Establishment of adequate work procedures, as well as written protocols for action in the event of an accident with risk of exposure to biological agents.
- All thanatopraxy practices should be carried out in appropriate places for this purpose, equipped with a suitable table with drainage and which can be easily washed and sanitised, as well as the floor and walls of the room.
- In addition, there should be non-manually operated washbasins, toilets with showers and changing rooms for the staff, as well as the necessary elements for protection and safety at work.
- If during embalming work or any other function of these professions a cut or puncture with material possibly contaminated with blood or other biological fluids occurs, follow the post-exposure instructions, which begin with cleaning and disinfection of the wound, followed by post-exposure prophylaxis whenever necessary. In addition, there must be a medical referral service to go to in the event of an accident, which must be indicated in the written protocol.

BEST HYGIENE MEASURES AND PRACTICES FOR FUNERAL HOME WORKER SAFETY

- Do not eat, drink or smoke in work areas.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your fingers.
- Wash hands before eating or smoking.
- Provide workers with appropriate work clothing and footwear.
- Provide appropriate and adequate toilet areas for the use of workers.

- Provide places to store work clothes separately from clothing or other personal clothing.
- When leaving the work area, workers must remove work clothes and personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be contaminated by biological agents.
- Have suitable places for storing protective equipment and ensure that it is properly cleaned and maintained.
- Single-use (non-reusable) PPE should be disposed of as biohazardous waste.
- Work and protective clothing, if reusable, should be washed at high temperatures and separately from other non-contaminated clothing.

FINAL WORD

Funeral attendants are responsible for various tasks, including placing the casket in the funeral parlor or chapel before services, organizing flower arrangements and lighting around the casket, escorting mourners during viewings and services, closing the casket, and storing funeral equipment after services are complete.