

**CREMATION -
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

ICSA

**INDEPENDENT
CREMATORIUMS
SOUTH AFRICA**

ICSA is a Specialist Cremation Company and is totally Independent of any funeral director or funeral related company.

ICSA presently own/manage 12 Crematoria which are situated in:

Coastal Area

Maitland
Durbanville
Worcester
Port Elizabeth
Port Shepstone
Durban

Inland Area

Bloemfontein
VanderbijlPar
Krugersdorp
Brakpan
Polokwane
Middleburg

ICSA is presently the Cremation Service Provider to approximately 1000 funeral directors situated throughout South Africa and commit to:

- A guaranteed identification process
- A personalised and Dignified Service
- Upholding the standards of the ICF (International Crematoria Federation)

By availing themselves of ICSA's Service the funeral directors not only experience a professional service of the highest ethical, moral and non negotiable standards, but are thus able to offer their clients total peace of mind regarding the cremation process.

All funeral directors are welcome to contact ICSA, to become part of the ICSA National Network, and thus proudly be a member of the ever growing ICSA family.

ICSA is the largest **Crematorium Company** in South Africa. As a member of the **NFDA**, consumers are guaranteed a **quality service** at any of the **12 crematoriums** managed by the company stretching across the country.

ICSA's client base includes:

- Funeral parlours
- Municipalities
- Funeral underwriters
- Private clients
- Small partnerships, etc

CREMATION – QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

From our many years of experience of cremations and our experience in dealing with bereaved families, we have compiled the following questions and answers that cover concerns most often expressed.

1. *May members of all religious groups be cremated?*

No. Although most Christian denominations permit cremation, it is forbidden for Muslims and Orthodox Jews. We recommend that you first discuss your denomination's stand on cremation with your pastor/reverend/religious leader before making any arrangements.

2. *But I thought the Roman Catholic Church forbade cremation?*

The Roman Catholic Church has permitted cremation since 1965, provided the motive in requesting it is not anti-doctrinal.

3. *Must there be a religious ceremony with cremation?*

No. You may choose a secular ceremony should you desire. However, should you wish to have a religious ceremony, but do not have a specific clergyman in mind, your undertaker will arrange for one to conduct a service.

4. *Must I have the funeral service at the crematorium?*

No. Some prefer to have the whole funeral service conducted either at their local church, at a funeral parlour, or at some other place of their choice. Some request that a portion of the service be held at their local church, with a short committal service in the crematorium chapel (where available), or that the whole service be conducted in the crematorium chapel (where available).

5. *Is there any provision for the use of music at a crematorium where a chapel is available?*

Yes. Most crematoria provide an organ. However, with so many different denominations using a crematorium, it is impossible to supply hymnbooks for each church

denomination. Your undertaker will be able to provide printed hymn sheets by prior arrangement.

6. *Does cremation not interfere with the natural process of decomposition?*

No. All it does is to speed up the natural process of “ashes to ashes”, “dust to dust”. Cremation no more interferes with the decomposition process than does the building of dams, the salvage of land, or the medical profession interfere with the natural process of illness and disease.

7. *Is the use of a crematorium facility restricted to certain groups?*

No. Crematoria are open to all that wish to use them. However, where incense is likely to be used, most crematorium authorities prefer the service to take place at the end of the day.

8. *How is cremation arranged?*

As there are a number of legal formalities with which one must comply with, it is wisest to let your undertaker arrange for the completion of the statutory forms for cremation through ICSA. If you are the executor or the next of kin, or are authorised by either to do so, you will be required to sign the Statutory Application for Cremation, before a Commissioner of Oaths. Your undertaker will help you with this, and then forward all the required documentation to ICSA.

9. *Do I sign anything else at this stage?*

Apart from signing the agreement – confirming your wishes for the cremation – with your undertaker, who entrust your loved one to ICSA for the cremation, you will be asked to sign a document to confirm how you wish to dispose of the cremated remains (ash). Our past experience indicates that it is wise to make a decision regarding the resting place of cremated remains as soon as possible. However, if you are undecided, discuss the matter with your undertaker to arrange temporary storage of remains, giving you time to make a decision.

10. *Who gives permission for a cremation to take place?*

Permission may only be given by a medical referee appointed by the crematorium authority. No cremation may take place without his/her authority. Before giving his/her authority, the medical referee must satisfy himself/herself that the deceased has been identified; that the

primary cause of death has been established beyond any doubt; and that cremation is not contrary to the written wishes of the deceased. He/she normally relies on the Application for Cremation, together with a medical declaration from the doctor who attended the deceased in the final illness, as well as a confirmatory medical declaration from a second doctor, who confirms the findings of the first doctor relating to the cause of death. Should the medical referee decline to authorise cremation, a private autopsy will be necessary if you still desire cremation. We cannot over-emphasise that it is in the interest of all concerned that the legal formalities be completed prior to the cremation taking place, whether it be at the undertaker or the crematorium.

11. *Is it true that pacemakers or other radioactive implants must be removed before cremation?*

Yes. These implants can explode at high temperatures, not only causing damage to cremators, but also placing crematorium staff at risk.

12. *What happens at the crematorium on the day of the funeral?*

The coffin may be placed on the catafalque before the mourners enter, or it may be carried into the chapel followed by the mourners in procession and placed on a undertakers' church trolley. At the moment of committal, the coffin may be obscured from view by means of curtains closing around it, it may be withdrawn through a gateway, or it may be left on the catafalque or church trolley until the mourners have left the chapel. The method varies at each crematorium and your undertaker or the crematorium staff will be able to give you advice concerning local customs.

13. *What happens to the coffin after the committal?*

It is withdrawn into the cremation room, where the nameplate is checked with the "Authority to Cremate" to confirm and ensure the correct identity.

14. *Can the relatives witness the committal of the coffin to the cremator?*

Yes. With some religions it is a requirement that this be done, but in other cases the superintendent of the crematorium would normally give permission.

15. *Does the cremation take place immediately?*

Not always. Most crematoria will endeavour to cremate

on the same day, but depending on local conditions; this may be delayed until the following day. Some crematoria have refrigerated storage, other require the funeral director to retain the mortal remains until the day of cremation.

16. *Is the coffin cremated with the body?*

Yes. The coffin as received, with all external fittings, is always cremated. In some municipal areas, crematoria may be required by regulations or legislation (bylaws) to remove the external non-combustible fittings prior to the cremation. The fittings will then be handed back to the funeral director or destroyed, in accordance with regulations.

17. *Must a coffin always be used for cremation?*

Yes. South African legislation and municipal bylaws require that a coffin is used for cremation. It also ensures that the dignity of the deceased is respected at all time. Hygiene and the health and safety of the crematorium staff is also a Legislated aspect to consider. Crematoriums further require the coffin to completely enclose the body, be strong enough to bear the weight of the body without collapsing and be made out of combustible material.

18. *Is more than one coffin cremated at one time in a cremator?*

No. By special arrangement, a parent and a child could be cremated together, but the design of modern cremators do not allow for two adults to be cremated together.

19. *How long does the cremation process normally last?*

Approximately 90 minutes.

20. *What happens with precious and other metals?*

The temperature at which modern crematoria operate (between 800°C and 1,000°C) is such that metals are fused with other material so that they are not recognizable. Any metallic material residue from a cremation is normally disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the relevant crematorium authority or as requested by the family where applicable. It is therefore strongly recommended that any items of jewellery should be removed by the family after death and prior to cremation.

21. *How do I know I will get the right remains?*

As each cremator will only accept one adult coffin, and the remains must be removed before the cremator is used again, all remains are kept separate throughout the process. ICSA Crematoriums have a unique identification process and families can rest assured that the correct remains are ultimately handed over.

22. *What happens to the remains after they are removed from the cremator?*

When the cremation is completed, the remains are withdrawn from the cremator into a cooling tray. When cool, any ferrous material is removed by means of a magnet. Remaining bone fragments are removed and processed to ash. The remaining coffin residual is then placed into a machine, which reduces them to a granular form. The quantity of cremated remains depends on the size and age of the deceased and, in the case of babies and very young children, there may be minimal remains recoverable.

23. *What options do I have with the cremated remains?*

Although some religious bodies prefer that remains be interred in consecrated ground, the final choice is normally that of the family. Remains may be scattered or buried at most local crematoria or within your church ground, or at some other place of your choice, eg. on a mountain, at sea, in a garden, under a rose bush, etc. Most crematoria provide some means of memorialisation, such as niches into which a permanent urn containing the remains can be placed and sealed with a suitably inscribed plaque. Some churches also provide this option. Some crematoria also offer miniature graves for the permanent retention of remains. Some families opt to bury remains in an existing family grave, or you may wish to have the remains in a memorial urn which you could keep at home. ICSA or your undertaker will assist you to carry out your wishes.

24. *What happens to remains strewn on the ground?*

As the highest biochemical activity exists at the surface of the soil and the remains are in a small granular form, weather and biochemical action quickly break them down to form part of the earth and within a short time there is no visible trace of the remains.

25. *If I elect not to retain the remains, but would still like to commemorate a loved one with a memorial, what other options are available?*

Some ICSA crematoria offer the facility of an entry in a Book of Remembrance, which is usually displayed in a special memorial chapel. It is also possible (if available) to place a wall plaque on kerbstones, which may be in perpetuity, or for a limited period requiring periodical renewal. A plaque on a wall of remembrance is also an option.

26. *Is it possible to send remains to other parts of the country or overseas?*

Yes, your undertaker will arrange this for you. The container, however, must be sturdy enough for the task.

27. *Is cremation more expensive than burial?*

No. Although the funeral director's charges are much the same for both services, the additional cost of the grave and the opening and closing fee is generally much higher than that charged for cremation. In addition, with burial, there are the on-going costs of grave maintenance and grave memorialisation.

28. *Is cremation not an aid to the concealing of a crime by eliminating evidence?*

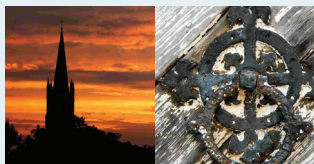
No, because the primary cause of death must be ascertained before permission to cremate is given by the medical referee.

29. *How can I ensure that I am cremated when I die?*

Leave specific instructions in your Will, and advise your next of kin. This will spare your family much distress.

30. *If I want to know more about cremation and possibly inspect a crematorium, how should I go about it?*

Telephone or visit your local ICSA crematorium and discuss the matter with the superintendent, who will be pleased to answer your queries and explain how the crematorium is operated. ICSA crematoria hold "open days" when the general public is invited to see its facilities. Many crematoria actively encourage churches and other groups to visit the crematorium. ICSA will arrange a visit for you if you prefer.



For help when death occurs, kindly
contact your nearest crematorium,
united under ICSA:

MAITLAND
DURBANVILLE
WORCESTER
DURBAN
PORT SHEPSTONE
PORT ELIZABETH
BLOEMFONTEIN
POLOKWANE
MIDDELBURG
VANDERBIJLPARK
KRUGERSDORP
BRAKPAN

**For further information e-mail
info@icsacrems.co.za**



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ICSA is a member of NFDA (the National Funeral Directors Association).
Ask the undertaker if they use ICSA owned crematoriums – you may insist
that they make use of ICSA rather than a privately owned crematorium.