

FCA-KC Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County

(Formerly Kern Memorial Society)

P. O. Box 1202 Bakersfield, CA 93302-1202

Affiliated with the national Funeral Consumers Alliance, Inc., and member of Funeral Consumers Alliance of California

FCA-KC NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012

MORTUARY PRICE SURVEY

Included in the FCA-KC Summer 2012 newsletter is our biannual general price survey of service providers in the Kern County area. Our thanks to the members of our board who personally visited each one to obtain a price list. This survey is compiled as a public service to give consumers a general comparison of funeral prices. If you have any problems reading or understanding the general price survey, you can download a copy of the "General Price List (GPL)" pamphlet from www.funerals.org/, Free FCA Publications. Funeral businesses are required by the rules of the Federal Trade Commission to give prices over the phone and to give a printed copy of a General Price List (GPL) to anyone appearing in person and requesting information about funeral goods and services. The prices shown are from the General Price Lists provided by the funeral homes. Prices are "subject to change without notice." FCA-KC has made a good faith attempt to report the price information as accurately as possible. Please contact the funeral business directly to confirm current pricing.

Let all of your friends know that this price survey is available at the FCA-KC website



CBS News: Problems at America's cemeteries, including exhuming bodies so plots can be resold, are raising questions about whether this part of the multibillion dollar "death-care" business needs more monitoring. 60 Minutes examines this largely unexamined industry, which in many cases is controlled by large corporations, and which consumer advocates believe may be taking advantage of people at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives. Anderson Cooper reported this story for a special edition of 60 Minutes. To view this via Internet see: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18560_162-57436612/cemeteries-draw-complaints/.



From the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Northern California – Spring 2012 Frequently Asked Questions "What do I do when a person dies?"

WHEN AN UNEXPECTED DEATH OCCURS
Call the decedent's physician and proceed as directed. If there is no doctor or he/she is unavailable, call 911. If you are absolutely certain that the person is dead, tell the 911 operator that you do not need an ambulance.

WHEN AN EXPECTED DEATH OCCURS
Call the decedent's physician, nurse, or hospice care provider. Contact the funeral home director to pick up the body, complete the death certificate, and submit the paperwork to the health department. It is important to know that California law allows survivors to care for their own dead. If you are acting as the funeral director, then you will need to prepare the death certificate yourself. These forms are available at the county's Office of Vital Records.

If the person who has died was a member of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County call the Funeral Home (Director) with whom arrangements have been made. This information is located on their "Last Wishes Planning Form."

From Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt–Spring 2012:

DO I NEED TO USE A FUNERAL HOME?
The FCA frequently receives telephone calls inquiring about cremating or burying a loved one without the services of a funeral home. Callers often want to know about the legalities of doing this, and what, if any, permits are needed.

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According to information provided by the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, the law does not prohibit consumers from preparing or transporting a body for disposition themselves. If you, as a consumer, make that choice, you must:

- File a properly completed Certificate of Death, signed by the attending physician or coroner, with the local registrar of births and deaths.
- Obtain a Permit for Disposition from the local registrar of births and death.
- Provide a casket or suitable container.
- Make arrangements directly with the cemetery or crematory.

***From—“FCACO News—The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Ohio”
Fall 2011/Spring 2012 and Spring/Summer
2012 newsletter***

Have you had "The Conversation" with your loved ones? If the answer is "No," then there is no time like the present to do so. Get all your vital paperwork together. Make sure whoever is going to take care of the details of your funeral knows that you are a member of FCACO, knows where all your paperwork is kept and knows what to do when the time comes! Perhaps you are the caretaker for a member of FCACO. Do you know what to do when death occurs? Check out our website for an informative sheet of information called, appropriately, "What to Do When Death Occurs." (If you do not have web access, phone the office to request a copy.) Talk about your membership in the FCACO and just what that means. Since family members are the most likely persons to make disposition decisions upon your death, showing them this newsletter may be very useful for them.

As a member of FCACO (a non-profit memorial society as defined by the FTC) you are entitled to choose one of four different funeral "plans:" Plan 1—Direct Cremation, Plan 2—Direct Burial, Plan 3—Cremation after Embalming and Showing (at the funeral home), Plan 4—Burial after Embalming and Showing (at the funeral home). Each plan has a specific set of details and a specific fixed, contracted, discounted price. (This price is negotiated periodically on your behalf by the FCACO with the funeral home provider). Upon joining, each member receives a form on which to choose the desired plan, a copy of which should be

sent promptly to the chosen funeral home. If the member has chosen such a "cooperating funeral home" the prices are automatically set. If the member has chosen a funeral home "outside" of the organization, the prices will be based on that funeral home's general price list. Usually a member has NOT pre-paid for the plan chosen, although that is possible and should be clearly stated in the individual's records, with any receipts attached. When death occurs and the body has been released by the authorities, your funeral agent (the one who will be going to the funeral home to sign the actual contract for service and taking care of other things) will call the funeral home with which you, the member, are registered.

If you are away from your home area when death occurs, there will obviously be other issues for your loved ones to deal with. When you travel you might want to take copies of pertinent documents with you. Check out the national web site at www.funerals.org for helpful information and brochures that you can print and give to your relatives in advance of your travel. They could also phone Funeral Consumers Alliance (National Headquarters in Vermont) at 802-865-8300 for assistance and advice should the need arise.



How Do I Join the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County?

It is very simple. Each adult member pays a one-time fee of \$30. Members' children are included without charge until they reach the age of 18. In addition, each member completes a form, "Survivor Instructions and Mortuary Information," he or she retains. Two copies of the completed form are mailed to FCA-KC. The FCA-KC will keep one copy for its files and send one to the mortuary. If you wish a wallet card, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**Funeral Consumers Alliance
of Kern County – Yes, I want to join!**

Here's my **Membership Application.**

NAME BIRTH DATE
1. _____

2. _____

Street Address

City Zip

Phone _____ Date _____

Email address (optional)

Minors under the age of 18, unmarried and living at home, are covered by the parent(s) membership.
Please list.

NAME BIRTH DATE
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

● Number of adult members _____ @ \$30
each = \$ _____

Detach and mail with your check made out to:

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P. O. Box 1202
Bakersfield CA 93302-1202



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www.funerals.org/affiliates/kern

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They say such nice things about people at their funerals that it makes me sad to realize I'm going to miss mine by just a few days."

Garrison Keillor quotes (American writer and broadcaster b.1942)

Want to know about your rights as a funeral consumer? Worried about being scammed? If you would like a member of FCA-KC to speak to your organization, please leave a voice-mail message at (661) 496-9959 and we will return your call to make arrangements. Our website is funerals.org/affiliates/kern.

HILLCREST CEMETERY LOT FOR SALE

**Holy Cross Lawn
Lot #3721
Spaces 1, 2, 3 & 4**

Plots are \$3,295 each, a savings of \$500 per plot.



Contact:

Merridith Warren
at 661-321-0409 between 1- 6 p.m. or email to merridith99@hotmail.com.

Yesterday is a memory, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift, which is why it is called the present. (Anon)