

June 14, 2011

Dear Funeral Service Provider,

As you are aware, the anatomical donation of a human body is truly a gift to the Commonwealth and to Virginia's future physicians and other health care professionals. The Code of Virginia requires the school or college using the anatomical gift to make arrangements for cremation of the cadaver donors after study is complete. Over the years, there has been much confusion regarding the process for cremation of cadavers that are utilized by Virginia's many colleges and universities. The Virginia Code and funeral service regulations have very specific procedures that must be followed when any cremation is performed. These procedures are no different for a Virginia State Anatomical Program (VSAP) cadaver donor.

The proper process is as follows. Upon receipt of a cadaver from the VSAP for study, all schools are given a Cremation Certificate that allows a specific funeral home to legally cremate that specific cadaver. The funeral service provider should **ALWAYS** receive the original VSAP Cremation Certificate from the school to allow for the proper identification and disposition of human remains. The information on the VSAP Cremation Certificate should be cross referenced with the number on the cadaver donor ear tag, as well as verifying the correct race/sex of the cadaver, when possible. The VSAP Cremation Certificate serves as documentation of positive identification as long as the number on the Cremation Certificate matches the number on the ear tag of the cadaver donor. In cases of complete dissection, the VSAP considers the donor body portions that constitute an identified individual to be the head with ear tag and the associated torso. The crematory/funeral home will be considered to be in compliance with positive identification criteria, as described in the Code of Virginia, when it receives, identifies and cremates both of these body portions together.

No Funeral Service Provider should cremate a VSAP cadaver without following proper cremation procedures as outlined within the Code of Virginia and funeral service regulations. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call the VSAP at (804) 786-2479 for additional information.