



# Coffin Accreditation

## July 2016

The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) announced on 5th July that they were endorsing the Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers Association (FFMA) coffin and casket protocol.

This statement is in line with the agreement and support of ICCM and APPC Cremation Associations. This protocol has taken four years to complete. We are sure that it will be well received and welcomed by all those involved in the Funeral Profession, ensuring that all coffins are fit for purpose.

FFMA have the majority of coffin manufacturers in the UK as members, we also have now attracted manufacturers from all parts of Europe. The protocol will act as a guide to coffin production for everyone. Health and Safety when handling coffins has to be a priority, our protocol will ensure this.

Our thanks to the cremation society representatives, Rick Powell of FBCA, Tim Morris of ICCM and Richard Barradell of APPC for their hard work and dedication whilst working with us. It was always going to be a trying and difficult project but in the end simply a fantastic result.

Our thanks to some of the major Funeral Associations, NAFD, SAIF, BIFD, BIE for their support and for promoting our protocol to their membership. The FFMA have had the benefit of an excellent Working Party Group, they have worked in tandem with the cremation representatives and staff of Intertek of Leicester and Leigh, our chosen testing house which is also supported by the cremation associations so therefore our thanks to our working party members:

Alan Dawes Chairman  
David Clark of Terry Smith Ltd  
David Spittle of Bradnam Joinery Ltd  
Bob Tomes of Colourful Coffins  
Adam Masters of Tributes  
Steve Soult of Steve Soult Ltd  
Julian Atkinson of JC Atkinson & Son Ltd  
Will Hunneybel of Greenfield Creations Ltd  
Our secretary Sue Bullock

Our grateful thanks to Henri Bislick of Intertek her help and dedication to this project has been inspirational. I believe the future of our profession in coffin manufacture is now in good order, in the safe hands of a quality protocol, a legacy for life.

David Crampton  
President FFMA



## **FFMA move nearer to agreeing test regime with the cremation sector.**

On Tuesday 16th June 2015 representatives from the FFMA and Cremation Societies met with the aim of advancing and agreeing the Pass / Fail criteria on the Test Protocol. Those in attendance were Richard Barradell, APPC, Rick Powell FBCA, Tim Morris ICCM, Andrew Mallalieu Facultatiev –Technologies, Julian Atkinson FFMA (Chair), Will Hunneybel FFMA & David Crampton FFMA President. The discussions were informative, with all parties gaining from the shared knowledge which the quorum offered.

Background: The Test Protocol was agreed some time ago, but a number of issues remained outstanding. All parties agreed some areas of doubt remained on what should constitute a “Pass”. While the majority of tests are not subjective, some tests warranted discussion to ensure an informed, fair and correct outcome.

Following dialogue, the tests were discussed and the majority were agreed outright. For the remainder, a format of research and disclosure was agreed to facilitate further discussions. The main areas of concern focused on:

- Auto Charger. The machines can exert a force of 3KN (300KG) and it was felt this level of force could destroy many types of coffin. It was agreed that a series of pre-tests would be conducted to understand how the rams and coffins endure.
- Ash Content. It was accepted that the standard ash casket at present has a capacity of 200 cubic inches / 3.2 litres. It was agreed that exact amounts of “coffin” ash, if excessive, could be an issue. The ratio between the “coffin” ash and “organic” ash was left undefined until further information could be researched.
- Ash Residue. It was agreed that materials should be tested to see if they leave any residue after cremation which could damage the cremator hearth. Materials submitted for pre-testing include Banana Leaf, Cardboard, Chipboard, Sea-grass, Water-hyacinth, Willow and Wool.
- Ignition and Radiant Heat Test.  
The test is required to determine the risk of pre-ignition when the coffin is been loaded into the cremation chamber.

It was agreed that more research is required to mimic the loading time and temperature to which a coffin is exposed during loading into a cremation chamber. This research will be conducted and shared to determine accuracy.

Consideration was also given to the inevitability of what would happen to the coffins already in the supply chain. How would they be identified and what would happen if some types failed the test? Should these be re-called or used? Dependent on the severity of the problem, it was acknowledged by all that this could be an issue.



Everyone was committed to ensuring a wide range of coffins remain available for cremation and all wanted to ensure that they are safe to use. It was agreed if such a scenario occurred, a possible way forward could be for the matter to be referred on a case-by-case basis to a sub-committee.

All parties agreed that the day had been most beneficial and all are looking to conclude the matters outstanding in the near future.

We record our special thanks to Intertek, our testing company, for hosting the meeting and providing lunch. Thanks also to all those who attended and contributed to a most beneficial day.

(Press release from FFMA)



**November 2014**

### **Coffin Testing Programme by The Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers Association (FFMA).**

Following a number of unsavoury incidents involving coffins and possible dangers to the health and safety of cremation operatives, the FFMA together with the Institute of Burial and Cremation Authority (IBCA) and Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management (ICCM) decided to enlist the help of SAIF and the NAFD in setting up a method of rigorously testing all coffins destined for cremation before being sold to Funeral Directors and accepted by Crematoria.

*Programme:* The FFMA have engaged the services of Interlek Ltd who will conduct a series of up to 8 tests on each model from each manufacturer involving strength, suitability for charging and ignition, % of ashes residue etc. and, if successful, every coffin produced to the specification will carry, under licence, the approved FFMA logo, model number and company ID number on the underside of the coffin.

*Dates:* From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 every crematorium in the UK will insist on only cremating accredited coffins. A six month trial period will start from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 but any unmarked (pre December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014) old stock at the end of the trial period, will be returned to the manufacturer for retrospective stamping, provided it meets the required standard. The manufacturing process will be overseen by the FFMA who will arrange random testing of manufacturers at their expense.

It is hoped that the whole of the profession will co-operate in this effort to eradicate embarrassing, unnecessary events that inevitably rub off on us all and can cause untold distress to the bereaved families.