



National Association of Funeral Directors



Scottish Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors



Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management



Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities

Agreed approach to recording the combined weight of coffin and deceased on Cremation Form A1

The Cremation (Scotland) Regulations 2019 come into force on 4 April and supersede the Cremation (Scotland) Regulations 1935. Among other things, they will introduce a number of new cremation forms, including Form A1 which will be used by all crematoriums in Scotland.

Section 5 of form A1 includes a space for the funeral director to provide details of the combined weight of the coffin and the deceased. This information was not captured on the previous form and many funeral directors do not currently have the facilities necessary to accurately provide this information.

Guidance published by the Scottish Government acknowledges that it may take some time for the new process to embed and that funeral directors operating in Scotland will need to equip themselves to provide accurate 'combined weight' information. With a view to minimising any disruption to bereaved families in the short term, this guidance suggests that cremation authorities and funeral directors should work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition.

In response to this, the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD), the Scottish Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (ScotSAIF), the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) have jointly agreed the following practical guidance which details how this issue should be dealt with in the first six months of the new application forms being in use. During that time, funeral directors should develop procedures and processes to enable them to complete the weight section of the Form A1.

Guidance for funeral directors when completing the 'combined weight' section of Form A1

Funeral directors with access to suitable weighing equipment

If the deceased person (in their coffin) is in your care prior to the cremation form being sent to the cremation authority, you should fill in the 'combined weight' section of Form A1 as accurately as possible.

If the deceased person (in their coffin) is not in your care prior to the cremation form being sent to the cremation authority, you should write the words "information to follow" on the form before submitting it to the cremation authority. You should then provide the accurate weight information as soon as practicable and in advance of the day of the cremation, preferably via email.

If the coffin used is particularly large (over 31 inches wide and over 7ft long¹) you should notify the cremation authority as soon as possible.

Funeral directors without access to suitable weighing equipment

You should provide an estimation in the 'combined weight' section of Form A1, provided that:

- the deceased person is in your care prior to the cremation form being sent to the cremation authority;
- you are able to provide a useful estimate based on the information available to you; and
- you are able to get the information from the client (considering the likelihood of causing upset to your client).

When providing an estimated weight, it is important that the fact that it is an estimation rather than an accurate reflection of the combined weight is made clear. It is recommended that the funeral director writes the words "estimated weight" next to the estimated figure.

If the body is not in your care at the time of submitting the application form, and no information is available from the family, hospital mortuary or care home it is not recommended that you provide an estimated weight on the form. The funeral director should simply write the words "information to follow" on the form, unless they feel they can provide any further information that may assist the cremation authority. An estimated weight should then be provided as soon as possible after the form has been submitted (and in any case, before the planned cremation date).

If it becomes clear at any point that the deceased person is particularly heavy (e.g. above 20 stones/125 Kg), the cremation authority should be updated as soon as possible, to ensure they can make any necessary arrangements.

Similarly, if the coffin used is particularly large (over 31 inches wide and over 7ft long²), you should notify the cremation authority as soon as possible.

It is recommended that funeral directors operating in Scotland should take steps to obtain access to suitable weighing equipment as soon as possible.

Guidance for cremation authorities when accepting Form A1

In the short term, it is hoped that crematorium staff will work with funeral directors and not refuse to accept Form A1 purely on the grounds that the 'combined weight' section has not been accurately completed. Further inquiries can be made by the cremation authority about any aspect of a cremation application form including the combined weight. This approach will help avoid delays and disruption for bereaved families.

It will take some time before all funeral directors in Scotland are able to provide accurate weight information. In the meantime, if crematorium staff have specific concerns about the weight or size of an individual, they should contact the funeral director to seek further information ahead of the cremation date.

¹ Suggested measurement taken from Mortonhall services update 10 October 2018

² Suggested measurement taken from Mortonhall services update 10 October 2018

Form A1 Combined Weight flowchart for funeral directors

