



To set and maintain the highest level of competence, ethics and educational standard for funeral service professionals.

Competency Profile for Funeral Service Professionals

Last Updated April 2016

Acknowledgments:

The AFSRB would like to thank the Funeral Education Review Committee for their tireless and thorough work on this project. The participants represented every aspect of funeral service in Alberta and dedicated significant time to this project. This work is entirely a reflection of the participant's commitment to the highest standard in funeral service.

Gemma Beierback

Dorothea Schaab

Jeff Hagel

Dean Ross

Brad Eleniak

Jennifer Greentree

Greta Budgen

Sonja MacDonald

Contents

Background: 4

Using the Competency Profile: 4

Assumptions:..... 5

Core Competency Overview – Funeral Director 6

Core Competency Overview - Embalmer 7

Core Competency Overview – Pre-need Sales..... 8

Roles – Funeral Director..... 9

Roles – Embalmer 12

Roles – Pre-Need..... 16

Background:

The **Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board** (AFSRB) licenses funeral businesses, crematories, funeral directors, embalmers and pre-need salespeople. The board also sets educational standards, monitors performance standards and investigates consumer complaints. In order to ensure the highest standard of professional excellence the AFSRB has created a competency profile for Funeral Directors, Embalmers and Pre-Need sales people. The competency profile is designed to be the framework within which professional expectations are set.

Using the Competency Profile:

The primary intention of the competency profile is to ensure that all educational and training programs that lead to candidates being considered for licensing as a Funeral Director, Embalmer and/or Pre-Need Sales person meet a high and consistent standard. All educational programming is expected to demonstrate training components that reflect the elements of the competencies.

The competency profile is also a tool for professionals to ensure they are reflecting and maintaining the highest level of professional excellence within their funeral service business. The competency profile provides a set of standard expectations that can be used to drive improvement and growth within funeral service.

The competency profile is a companion document and does not supersede the Code of Conduct, regulatory framework, legislative authority or regulatory discretion of the AFSRB.

Assumptions:

There are several assumptions embedded in the use of this competency profile:

- Funeral professionals adhere to the Code of Conduct.
- Funeral professionals adhere to all applicable legislation and regulation including but not limited to:
 - Funeral Service
 - Privacy
 - Health and Safety
 - Criminal and Civil
- Funeral professionals are customer centered.
- Funeral professionals value lifelong learning.
- Funeral professionals understand how their specific role contributes to the overall success of the funeral experience for the families they serve.
- Funeral professionals are aware of the need to protect their personal safety.

Core Competency Overview – Funeral Director

Funeral Director

Core Competency	Description
Business Practice	Funeral Directors are accountable for all aspects of the funeral process as well as managing; administration, time, resources and priorities.
Communication	Funeral Directors use effective communication and conflict resolution to ensure the best experience for the families they serve.
Professionalism	Funeral Directors are committed to the best interest of the families they serve and the community through ethical practice and high personal standards of behaviour.
Technical expectations	Funeral Directors are involved in every aspect of a family's funeral experience and require various levels of technical understanding to successfully perform their role.

Core Competency Overview - Embalmer

Embalmer

Core Competency	Description
Business Practice	Embalmers are accountable for all aspect of the embalming process as well as overall management of the deceased and administration, time, resources and priorities in the preparation facility.
Communication	Embalmers use effective communication and conflict resolution to ensure the best experience for the families they serve.
Professionalism	Embalmers are committed to the best interest of the families they serve and the community through ethical practice and high personal standards of behaviour.
Technical expectations	Embalmers are involved in a component of a family's funeral experience and require various levels of technical understanding to successfully perform their role.

Core Competency Overview – Pre-need Sales

Pre-Need Sales

Core Competency	Description
Business Practice	Pre-Need sales people are accountable for all aspects of the funeral process specifically related to the provision of pre-need contracts.
Communication	Pre-need sales people use effective communication to ensure the best experience for the families they serve.
Professionalism	Pre-need sales people are committed to the best interest of the families they serve and the community through ethical practice and high personal standards of behaviour.
Technical expectations	Pre-need sales people are involved in an aspect of a family's funeral experience and require various levels of technical understanding to successfully perform their role.

Roles - Funeral Director

Competency 1:

Business Practice: Funeral Directors are accountable for all aspects of the funeral process as well as managing administration, time, resources and priorities.

Demonstration of competency:

- Demonstrates an ability to manage situations and meet timelines.
- Understands the ultimate responsibility of the funeral director to the success of the funeral experience for the family and attendees.
- Demonstrates the ability to prioritize and delegate tasks and duties.
- Demonstrates the ability to nurture effective interpersonal relationships and advance team cohesion
- Possesses clerical and Administrative acumen
 - Data entry
 - Document creation
 - Writing skills – grammar
 - Obituary writing skills
 - Basic math
- Demonstrates the ability to write and interpret contracts and other legal document.
- Understands the elements of an enforceable contract.
- Demonstrates the ability to organize and plan a funeral service.

Competency 2:

Communication: Funeral Directors use effective communication and conflict resolution to ensure the best experience for the families they serve.

Demonstration of competency:

- Possesses the skills to effectively communicate in writing, in person and on the phone.
- Possesses the skills to effectively guide the public through the funeral process.
- Possesses the skills to effectively advise and educate pallbearers and other funeral participants to ensure they follow proper procedures.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the psychology of grief and grieving.

- Possesses the ability to recognize when and where to refer the public when a situation is beyond the scope of the funeral director.
- Understands the importance of clear and timely communication with the embalming staff regarding preparation of the deceased, during or after the arrangement conference with the legal representative.
- Possesses the ability to listen with empathy and without judgement.
- Possesses the ability to interact with the public confidently.
- Demonstrates the ability to speak confidently to an audience.
- Demonstrated excellent conflict resolution skills.

Competency 3:

Professionalism: Funeral Directors are committed to the best interest of the families they serve and the community through ethical practice and high personal standards of behaviour.

Demonstration of competency:

- Conducts self within legal requirements and ethical standards with a thorough understanding of the code of conduct/legal/regulatory expectations and where the most current resources are available
- Demonstrates professional conduct, appearance and demeanor both at work and within the community
- Contributes to the advancement of the funeral service profession through ongoing continuing education and contributing to the learning of others
- Supports the development of the funeral service profession through participation in conferences, professional committees and community engagement opportunities.
- Practices self-care by recognizing and addressing physical and emotional well-being

Competency 4:

Technical expectations: Funeral Directors are involved in every aspect of a family's funeral experience and require various levels of technical understanding to successfully perform their role.

Demonstration of competency:

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the schedule of diseases.

- Demonstrates proper use of personal protective equipment.
- Understands and practices universal precautions.
- Possesses a thorough understanding of appropriate cleaning and disinfecting procedures of equipment.
- Possesses current basic first aid certification.
- Understands WHMIS and how to manage chemicals.
- Understands and demonstrates the proper disposal of biohazards.
- Understands grave set up; preparation, protocol and safety.
- Understands the function and safe operation of a stretcher.
- Possesses the ability to assess and evaluate environmental variables to ensure safe, dignified and effective movement of the deceased.
- Understands how to move the deceased focused on personal physical safety and proper lifting technique.
- Understands how to verify if a deceased has a pacemaker and proper removal.
- Possesses a thorough understanding of safe operations of all funeral home equipment.
- Demonstrates safe driving practices and funeral specific information regarding processions.
- Understands identification and chain of custody procedures from time and place of death through to final disposition.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of basic aftercare requirements and the legal obligations and responsibilities of the legal representative regarding settling the estate.
- Practices proper, safe, and secure storage of the deceased and personal effects.
- Understands how to provide initial basic care of the deceased.
- Understands respectful and appropriate presentation of the deceased in the cremation container or casket including positioning, clothing and personal items.
- Demonstrates the ability to cosmetize and hairstyle the deceased.
- Demonstrates the ability to verify and assess the condition of the deceased prior to viewing and/or identification.
- Demonstrates the ability to provide guidance and explanation to families regarding appropriate expectation.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the embalming theory and process to the extent that it is reasonably expected to be communicated to families.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the cremation process, crematory operations and procedure to the extent that it is reasonably expected to be communicated to families.

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of various customs, rituals and religious/cultural traditions in relation to death, care and presentation of the deceased, as well as the needs of their families.
- Possesses the ability to operate commonly used technology including:
 - Computers
 - Multi-media presentations
 - Microphones
 - Sounds systems
 - Recording devices
- Possesses a basic understanding of graphic design/stationery.
- Possesses a basic understanding of staging and presentation with respect to the preparation of the environment for the ceremonial farewell.
- Possesses an extensive knowledge of products and services related to the provision of funeral service.

Roles - Embalmer

Competency 1:

Business Practice: Embalmers are accountable for all aspects of the embalming process as well as overall management of the deceased and the administration, time, resources and priorities in the preparation facility.

Demonstration of competency:

- Demonstrates the ability to manage a situation and meet timelines.
- Understands the ultimate responsibility of the embalmer to the success of the funeral experience for the family and attendees.
- Demonstrates the ability to prioritize and delegate tasks and duties.
- Demonstrates the ability to nurture effective interpersonal relationships and advance team cohesion.
- Possesses clerical skills:
 - Data entry
 - Verifying permission to embalm and identification of the deceased
 - Basic math
 - Ability to read and interpret a contract

Competency 2:

Communication: Embalmers use effective communication and conflict resolution to ensure the best experience for the families they serve.

Demonstration of competency:

- Possesses the ability to effectively communicate in writing, in person and on the phone.
- Demonstrates the ability to accurately verify instructions for the preparation of the deceased.
- Possesses a basic understanding of the psychology of grief and grieving.
- Possesses the ability to recognize when and where to refer the public when a situation is beyond the scope of the embalmer.
- Possesses the ability to listen with empathy and without judgement.
- Possesses the ability to interact with the public confidently.
- Demonstrates excellent conflict resolution skills.

Competency 3:

Professionalism: Embalmers are committed to the best interest of the families they serve and the community through ethical practice and high personal standards of behaviour.

Demonstration of competency:

- Conducts self within legal requirements and ethical standards with a thorough understanding of the code of conduct/legal/regulatory expectations and where the most current resources are available
- Professional conduct, appearance and demeanor both at work and within the community
- Contributes to the advancement of the funeral service profession through ongoing continuing education and contributing to the learning of others
- Supports the development of the funeral service profession through participation in conferences, professional committees and community engagement opportunities.
- Practices self-care by recognizing and addressing physical and emotional well-being

Competency 4:

Technical expectations: Embalmers are involved in a component of a family's funeral experience and require various levels of technical understanding to successfully perform their role.

Demonstration of competency:

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the schedule of diseases.
- Demonstrates proper use of personal protective equipment.
- Understands and practices universal precautions.
- Possesses a thorough understanding of appropriate cleaning and disinfecting procedures of equipment.
- Possesses a basic first aid certification.
- Demonstrates an understanding of WHMIS and how to manage chemicals.
- Understands and demonstrates the proper disposal of biohazards.
- Understands the function and safe operation of a stretcher.
- Possesses the ability to assess and evaluate environmental variables to ensure safe, dignified and effective movement of the deceased.
- Understands how to move the deceased focused on personal physical safety and proper lifting technique.
- Understands how to verify if a deceased has a pacemaker and proper removal.
- Possesses thorough understanding and safe operations of funeral home equipment.
- Understands identification and chain of custody procedures from time and place of death through to final disposition.
- Practices proper, safe, and secure storage of the deceased and personal effects.
- Demonstrates the ability to provide initial basic care of the deceased.
- Understands respectful and appropriate presentation of the deceased in the cremation container or casket including positioning, clothing and personal items.
- Demonstrates the ability to cosmetize and hairstyle the deceased.
- Demonstrates the ability to verify and assess the condition of the deceased prior to viewing and/or identification.
- Possesses the ability to provide guidance and explanation to families regarding appropriate expectation.
- Possesses a thorough understanding and ability to apply embalming theory and processes including but not limited to:
 - Chemistry
 - Microbiology
 - Anatomy and physiology

- Restorative art
- Understands that the role of the embalmer encompasses both autopsied and un-autopsied bodies and demonstrates the ability to manage both.
- Possesses a basic understanding of the cremation process and crematory operations.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of various customs, rituals and religious/cultural traditions in relation to death, care and presentation of the deceased, as well as the needs of their families.
- Possesses the ability to operate commonly used technology including:
 - Computers
- Possesses an extensive knowledge of products and services related to the preparation of the deceased.

Roles - Pre-Need

Competency 1:

Business Practice: Pre-Need sales people are accountable for all aspects of the funeral process specifically related to the provision of pre-need contracts.

Demonstration of competency:

- Possess the ability to manage a situation and meet timelines.
- Understands the ultimate responsibility of the funeral director to the success of the funeral experience for the family and attendees.
- Possesses the ability to prioritize and delegate tasks and duties.
- Demonstrates the ability to nurture effective interpersonal relationships and advance team cohesion.
- Demonstrates clerical and administrative acumen
 - Data entry
 - Document creation
 - Writing skills – grammar
 - Obituary writing skills
 - Basic math
 - Contract writing and the elements of an enforceable contract
- Possess a basic understanding of how to organize and plan a funeral service.
- Possess a thorough understanding of the various pre-need funding options.

Competency 2:

Communication: Pre-need sales people use effective communication to ensure the best experience for the families they serve.

Demonstration of competency:

- Possess the ability to effectively communicate in writing, in person and on the phone.
- Possess the ability to effectively guide the public through the funeral process.
- Possess a basic understanding of the psychology of grief and grieving.
- Possess the ability to recognize when and where to refer the public when a situation is beyond the scope of the pre-need sales person.
- Possess the ability to listen with empathy and without judgement.

- Possess the ability to interact with the public confidently.
- Demonstrate the ability to speak confidently to an audience.
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of conflict resolution.

Competency 3:

Professionalism: Pre-Need Sales People are committed to the best interest of the families they serve and the community through ethical practice and high personal standards of behaviour.

Demonstration of competency:

- Conducts self within legal requirements and ethical standards with a thorough understanding of the code of conduct/legal/regulatory expectations and where the most current resources are available.
- Professional conduct, appearance and demeanor both at work and within the community.
- Contributes to the advancement of the funeral service profession through ongoing continuing education and contributing to the learning of others.
- Supports the development of the funeral service profession through participation in conferences, professional committees and community engagement opportunities.
- Practice self-care by recognizing and addressing your physical and emotional well-being.

Competency 4:

Technical expectations: Pre-need sales people are involved in an aspect of a family's funeral experience and require various levels of technical understanding to successfully perform their role.

Demonstration of competency:

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the schedule of diseases,
- Possess a basic first aid certification.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of basic aftercare requirements and the legal obligations and responsibilities of the legal representative regarding settling the estate.
- Possess a thorough understanding of safe operations of funeral home equipment.

- Possess an Understanding of identification and chain of custody procedures from time and place of death through to final disposition.
- Ability to provide guidance and explanation to families regarding appropriate expectations.
- Possess a basic understanding of the embalming theory and process to the extent that it would reasonably be expected to be communicated to families.
- Possess a basic understanding of the cremation process, crematory operations and procedure to the extent that it would reasonably be expected to be communicated to families.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of various customs, rituals and religious/cultural traditions in relation to death, care and presentation of the deceased, as well as the needs of their families.
- Possess the ability to operate commonly used technology including:
 - Computers
 - Multi-media presentations
 - Microphones
 - Sounds systems
 - Recording devices
- Possess a basic understanding of graphic design/stationery.
- Possess a basic understanding of staging and presentation for the preparation of the environment for the ceremonial farewell.
- Possess an extensive knowledge of products and services related to the provision of funeral service.