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Funeral Homes of Virginia*

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INDEPENDENT FUNERAL HOMES

OF VIRGINIA



2016-2

Hello everyone!

As Tom Gale would say, "You are all looking great today!" I would first like to give Blake Baker a huge thank you for doing such a great job serving as our president for the last two years and for all of the time you have invested. Thank you also for the guidance you have given me in the last year preparing me for what's to come. Also thank you to our Board Members for your time and efforts to running a smooth association.



What a great convention in Virginia Beach! I would first like to say how honored I am to be the President of the Independent Funeral Homes of Virginia. I am looking forward to serving our association and getting to know all of you better. It was so great to see the members and suppliers that attended. We had some great educational speakers including a Sea Burial Certification class that was very interesting. I would like to thank all of the members and the suppliers that attended and continue to support our Association. We hope you all enjoyed the excellent speakers, great food, exhibits, and most important, the fellowship with colleagues and friends. Our members are what makes us and I love being part of such a great association.

A little bit about me...I have been licensed for twelve years and have the honor of working for my father, Emory Samford, at Williams Funeral Home & Crematory in Lawrenceville, Virginia. If you are in ever in Lawrenceville, stop by and see us! When I was in Kindergarten, our teacher asked us what our parents did for a living and I told her my dad cut grass...because that's all I ever saw him do! As you all know...we have many roles at our business. That is what I love about this special association is that we can all relate to the many challenges that we all face and help support each other. Please feel free to contact me if you ever need anything.

Thank you very much to Bruce and Bo for keep us organized and running. Thank you for all that you do to keep us up to date with Legislative issues that affects us. You guys are always on top of things and we appreciate you looking out for us.

We are planning our 1 day continuing educational class in March. This year we would like to announce we will be adding more exhibits for the day. We thought this would be a great opportunity to meet with our valued suppliers and also get our continuing education hours. I look forward to seeing you all there and hearing some great speakers!

We are always looking for new members so spread the word about our great association and let us look forward to a great year! Keep doing what you do! "Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do." Steve Jobs.

~Katharine Samford
IFHV President

Human Resources 101!

4 ways to optimize staff

- Hire right. The road to effective office staff begins with smart hiring practices. Clearly define the job they are hiring for and avoid excessive cross-coverage of duties. Recognize varying behavioral styles that might make staff better for one position over another. Hire for attitude as well as aptitude.
- Learn what motivates your staff. Really get to know your staff on a personal level. As you learn more about each staff member, doctors can develop a customized strategy for motivating them. Connect with employees, and they will be motivated to come to work and succeed.
- Emphasize personal development. Out of the gate, it's important to underscore with employees that personal development is a practice requirement.
- Don't forget the little things. Sometimes all it takes is recognition of a job well done.

What to do when you need to fire an Employee

Terminating employees is never a pleasant task, but with the guidance below, you can increase your chances of avoiding employment landmines.

- **Do not fire an employee in anger.** Before discharging an employee, take time to evaluate the decision.
- **Follow policy.** If a company has written employment policies, including termination procedures, managers should follow them consistently.
- **Document the reasons for discharge.** Whenever a termination is not documented with warnings or efforts to improve employee performance, a likely conclusion is that there was an improper motive for the decision.
- **Be truthful.** An employer may be tempted to soften the blow by telling an employee misinformation. Then, when the employer takes steps to replace the employee, these actions cast doubt on the employer's credibility.
- **Offering a severance package.** A severance package requires careful consideration. It may buffer the employee's transition and reduce the level of animosity likely to lead to litigation. Any severance agreement which is contingent upon a release of claims against the employer should be drafted by an attorney.
- **Include an observer.** Termination should be conveyed in person. Because termination interviews are fraught with emotion, an observer should be present.
- **Use a termination letter.** Drafting a termination letter allows time to carefully think through what is said and how it is said. The termination letter should be delivered to the employee upon termination and should convey the decision to terminate and a general statement of the reasons.
- **Be respectful.** Termination proceedings should be handled with as much tact and consideration as possible, regardless of the reason. It may be helpful to use a neutral location, such as an empty office or conference room. If the meeting is insulting and disagreeable, the likelihood of legal action increases.

How to Classify an Employee under the FLSA

Classifying an employee as exempt or nonexempt from the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is among the most important tasks that you must perform. Every year, thousands of lawsuits are filed by employees who allege they were misclassified. There are specific steps to follow for determining whether an employee qualifies for a particular exemption. Follow these steps to classify an employee.

- Audit the Employee's Job Duties
- Determine Which Duty is Primary
- Decide Which Exemption Apply
- Determine if the Employee Qualified for the Exemption
- Confirm That the Employee Also is Exempt under State Requirements
- Inform Your Payroll Department
- Fulfill Recordkeeping Requirements

<http://www.xperthr.com/how-to/how-to-classify-an-employee-under-the-flsa/9341/>

New Federal Overtime Laws

Under a new federal rule recently announced by the White House, anybody making a salary of less than \$47,476 (\$913 a week) will automatically qualify for overtime pay when they work more than 40 hours a week. That's roughly double the \$23,660 threshold (or \$455 a week) that's currently in place.

The change will go into effect on Dec. 1, 2016. It is intended to expand access to overtime pay for otherwise low-salaried workers who log long hours but have been treated as exempt from overtime because they perform some managerial duties.

The new threshold will be updated every three years to make sure it stays at the 40th percentile of full-time salaries in the lowest income region of the country. Based on wage growth projections, that means it could rise to \$51,000 by 2020.

In figuring out whether salaried workers' income qualifies them for overtime, employers will be allowed to count their bonuses and commissions up to 10% of the threshold. So, for instance, if someone makes \$44,000 today and gets a \$4,000 bonus, his total income (\$48,000) will mean that he will remain exempt from overtime.

The overtime rate is one and a half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

Beginning on December 1, 2016, in general, employees must meet the following factors in order to qualify as exempt from overtime:

- Employee must be salaried – i.e., paid a predetermined and fixed amount that is not reduced based on quality or quantity of work;
- Employee must be paid at least \$913 per week (\$47,476 annually); and
- Employee must primarily perform executive, administrative, or professional duties, as defined by the Department of Labor's regulations.

Texas to Require Burial or Cremation of Aborted Fetuses

Posted on July 11, 2016 by [CDFuneralNews](#)

Read Full Article at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/texas-to-require-burial-or-cremation-of-aborted-fetuses/>

Texas intends to require aborted fetuses to be buried or cremated come September, adding new abortion regulations after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the state's restrictive clinic laws.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott ordered state health officials to propose the changes, his office said Thursday, which were quietly put out for public comment this month.

Similar fetal remain rules in Indiana are on hold after a federal judge granted a temporary injunction last week against that state's sweeping new anti-abortion law. That bill, signed in March by GOP Gov. Mike Pence, more notably also banned abortions due to genetic abnormalities.

Texas, however, isn't waiting for lawmakers to pass a bill regarding fetal remains. Abbott had been talking with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission for months about making a change, Abbott spokeswoman Ciara Matthews said.

State agencies in Texas are allowed to adopt some rules on its own without legislative approval. Although the rules are expected to take effect in the fall, Matthews said Abbott hopes the Legislature will "enshrine" the rules into law next year.

"Governor Abbott believes human and fetal remains should not be treated like medical waste, and the proposed rule changes affirms the value and dignity of all life," Matthews said.



Embracing Pokemon Go

A How To Guide for Funeral Homes and Cemeteries

<http://connectingdirectors.com/articles/48537-funeral-home-cemetery-pokemon-go>

Posted on July 13, 2016 by *DISRUPT Media*

Seemingly everyone is playing *Pokémon GO*. If you're not already playing it yourself, you've no doubt heard about it. It's not an exaggeration to say that the new mobile and augmented reality game from Niantic Labs and The Pokémon Company is having an enormous impact on people's daily routines. In the DISRUPT Media office we have an employee who's family member logged over 20 miles of walking playing the game this weekend. Attendance at churches across the US was spiked this weekend as the creator of Pokémon GO labelled most churches as *Pokéstops*.

For those not yet in the know, *Pokémon GO* uses your phone's GPS and camera to turn the real world into a massive hunting ground for the iconic creatures, but it also transforms local landmarks and businesses into Pokémon Gyms (where trainers go to train their Pokémon and battle other teams) and PokéStops, which players can physically visit to stock up on free accessories and items like PokéBalls.

If you are a funeral home or cemetery owner and haven't checked out this game, I highly recommend downloading it for free from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store – there's a good chance you could be one of these Gyms or PokéStops (especially if you are a cemetery)!

How to Embrace the Game

If you own a cemetery location there is a very good chance you have already noticed a large spike in foot traffic on your grounds. The creators of the Pokemon GO app have predetermined many public locations (cemeteries, Libraries, Churches, Landmarks, etc) as Pokestops or Gyms.

The first thing to do is find out if your funeral home or cemetery is a Gym or Pokéstop (or if you are near one) – many cemeteries are Pokestops. There is currently not a way to pay for your location to be a Pokestop, as mentioned above these are predetermined by the developer.

If your location is a Gym or Pokestop or near by one you can capitalize by purchasing Lures. Lures increase the rate of Pokemon generation in the area around the PokeStop where they're placed for one half hour. Because Pokemon are scarcer than you think luring is a powerful tool that you have to see to believe.

Luring is extremely affordable. Let's do the math. With \$100 netting you 14,500 Pokecoins and an eight-pack of Lures costing 680 Pokecoins:

$14,500 \text{ Pokecoins} / 680 = 21$ eight-packs of lures

$(21 * 8) / 2 = 84$ hours

$\$100 / 84 \text{ hours} = \1.19 per hour

To purchase Lures in the app all you have to do is:

- Tap the red Pokeball at the bottom of your HUD
- Tap "Shop"
- Scroll down and tap the purple, box-shaped Lures to purchase. You'll re-direct to your app store's payment system
- Once back in-app, tap the red Pokeball again, then tap "Items"
- Tap the purple Lure to activate!



For a little more than a dollar an hour, you can bring virtually guaranteed foot traffic around your funeral home or to your cemetery. The ROI here is ridiculous from a awareness perspective, so if your business is anywhere near a PokeStop, this is something a funeral home or cemetery should try. You should also screen shot the pokemon game on you phone showing Pokemons at your location and share those on your funeral home or cemetery Facebook Page.

Capitalizing on the Traffic

With all the foot traffic Pokemon GO could bring to your funeral home or in your cemetery you should also be considering how to maximize the upside of the extra exposure. Here a few off the top suggestions:

Go crazy on social media! Post screen grabs of the game showing pokemon at your location. Post welcoming messages for pokemon players.

Offer a free gift to Pokemon Go players (free water with your logo, candy, pens, swag).

Place a sign outside of your funeral home or cemetery welcoming Pokemon Go players! (great positive PR story)

Set up a stand or hang out at a local pokestop

Educate the Pokemon Go players about funeral etiquette

I would encourage you to embrace this and be ahead of the rest! If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!

What can you do legally?

Enforce Your Rules: You are only bound by your rules and regs – if you're open from dawn and close at dusk you need to enforce these rules. Also, if people are running through your cemetery and destroying property you can enforce your rules against that.

Ask People to Not Play the Game in The Cemetery: You can plead with people to not play the game in the cemetery but you cannot ban them from playing or entering.

Contact Law Enforcement: If the foot traffic becomes to much and things start to get out of hand then you should contact local law enforcement to help regain control.

Ask Nintendo to Remove Your Location as a Pokestop or Gym: See instructions below. CAUTION: Only do this if you are really having issues. The Pros of embracing this viral trend far out weigh the cons!

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4 Parts of a Funeral Families Take With Them When They Leave

Whenever you work in a profession that is centered around an event – whether it’s putting together a beautiful wedding, hosting an extravagant party, or giving someone a grand send off for their funeral – you always want to make sure that everything centered around the event is perfect. You stress and prep and prepare in the days leading up to it, and then let out a big sigh of relief when everything comes to a close and is a big success.

For funeral professionals, everything we do is centered around some kind of big event – the funeral service, the burial, the memorial celebration. So we spend a lot of our time thinking of how we can make the funeral as perfect as possible for our families, and rarely think about what happens once they walk out of our doors.

But the truth is, funerals are not just a one-day event that families attend and then never think about again. They’re a big deal and they stay with them for a lifetime. It’s typically the last memory they form with their loved one. And the feelings and stories that are shared at a funeral are something that families take with them as they move forward through their grief.

As funeral professionals, it’s important to understand all of the aspects of a funeral that families take with them when they leave, because it may just alter the way that you help the families entering your funeral home – after all, how you interact with your families has a lasting, profound impact on their overall funeral experience.

1. The Comfort They Felt During The Process

In 10 or 15 years, families may not necessarily remember what music was played throughout the funeral service. What they will undoubtedly remember is how their funeral director made them feel throughout the process.

Did you sit down with them one-on-one, take the time to learn about who their loved one was, and truly listen to their wishes? Or did you offer them your traditional funeral package, and simply switch out the name on the program that you always use?

Funeral professionals are often the first people that grieving families interact with who understand how they are feeling and what they are going through. You truly have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help them navigate through their feelings of loss, and offer them insights and advice for moving forward in a healthy way. Don’t let the stresses and chaos of your daily life overpower your opportunity to help the people who have come to you for guidance.

2. The Healing Effect Of The Service

Sometimes we get lost in the hustle and bustle of our profession and we forget about the value of the services that we offer. But when you get down to the core of it, funerals were created to help families heal.

Sitting down to plan the service gives them an opportunity to come to terms with reality of the situation, while many other aspects of the funeral planning process (bringing in important photos and mementos, writing out the obituary) help families truly reflect on the impact that their loved one made. And when you pair their personal opportunities to reflect on the life lived with the many stories and memories that will be shared by friends and family attending the funeral, it’s easy to see how funerals have really become the ultimate healing experience.

3. How They Felt When They Saw Their Loved One For The Last Time

One of the biggest things that funeral professionals do to help their families is give them the opportunity to see their loved one one last time. Depending on the circumstances of the loss, many family members do not often get a chance to say goodbye to their loved ones before they are gone forever. And even for family members that may get a chance to say their goodbyes in a hospital or hospice center, it’s very unlikely that they are seeing their loved one in the way that they want to remember them – without the invasion of tubes or hospital equipment.

However, when families choose to have an open casket at a funeral service, they are giving themselves an opportunity for closure... and they are giving funeral professionals a chance to make an invaluable impact in one of the most significant moments of their lives.

4. The Stories and Memories That Are Shared

There’s a reason that many funeral services are open for all friends and family to attend. Not only are funerals a great opportunity for a family to see just how big of an impact their loved one’s life had on the people around them, but it’s also a chance for them to revisit happy memories and even hear new stories of their loved one’s life that they have never heard before.

Every single story that is shared at a funeral – whether it is a new story that is shared for the first time, or an old memory that is stirred from a photo or Memorial Video – is a chance to build on the story of someone’s life. It adds new depth to who they were as a person, and brings out the chance for more laughs and cries, even once the loved one has passed.

Photos and videos help a loved one live on long after they have gone, and sharing these important elements at a funeral help everyone in attendance build a more complete picture of their loved one than the one they had when they walked into your funeral home.



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Randy Minter installs the new offices of the Association of Independent Funeral Homes of Virginia



Blake Baker accepts his Presidential Award for his service from 2014-2016

Governor McAuliffe Announces Administration Appointments

RICHMOND – Governor Terry McAuliffe announced additional appointments to his Administration today. The appointees will join McAuliffe’s Administration focused on finding common ground with members of both parties on issues that will build a new Virginia economy and create more jobs across the Commonwealth.

Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers

Mia F. Mimms, FSL, JD, LLM of Richmond, President, Mimms Funeral Home

Connie B. Steele, FSL* of Roanoke, Manager, Serenity Funeral Homes and Cremation Service



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