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**The Association of
Independent Funeral Homes
of Virginia**

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02/01/2020
V-1-2020

Dear IFHVer-

It may be wintertime now, but spring will be here next month! As The Beatles sing in 'Here Comes the Sun', "I feel that ice is slowly melting". I can finally tell that the sun is setting later, which is a great sign that warmer days are right around the corner.

Also right around the corner is our association's biggest event of the year, the one day Continuing Education conference in Richmond. Not only can you get all of your continuing education units in one fell swoop, but you'll be able to fellowship with your colleagues from around the state. I've only missed it one year, and that was when I boycotted it because the previous year Bo allowed someone to eat my vegetarian sandwich! The loss was all mine though, because I missed out on my CE units as well as the chance to hang out with the best funeral associates in the Commonwealth.

I don't want to brag about IFHV, but our association was the only one to alert us that a house bill was being readied that would allow the sale of pre-need caskets by non licensed funeral personnel. I personally penned a letter to the bill's originator, and I hope you will, too. Instead of being 'consumer friendly', as Delegate Hurst believes it is, this bill has the potential to cause a myriad of problems for consumers. Bo and Bruce are looking out for our profession during the General Assembly, but cannot do everything by themselves. Get involved!

In response to many requests from IFHV members, we will be returning to Virginia Beach in August for a summer conference. I hope you will be able to attend this event, and can combine some professional learning along with some fun in the surf and sand!

Like many of you, our association has been looking for ways to trim our expenses. One way was to eliminate our paper directory and put this roster in a digital form. This has been completed, and a copy of our member firms can be found on our website. Shaving expenses is good, but an even better way to bolster our financial picture would be for more funeral homes to join IFHV. Please give this matter some thought, and either invite a firm to join or pass their names along to Bo. New members are truly the lifeblood of our group.

I hope to see you in Richmond in March (don't eat my veggie sandwich, though!), as well as at the beach this summer. Thanks for all you do to make funeral service better!

All the best-

Sammy Oakey



2020 Virginia General Assembly

Your Team At Work

The 2020 Virginia General Assembly began on January 8th with the Democrats controlling both the House and Senate for the first time since the 1980s. With a record number of bills introduced your IFHV legislative team got to work right away. Below you'll see a number of bills that are of interest to IFHV and its members.

HB 641 Funeral service providers; caskets provided by third parties.

Introduced by: [Chris L. Hurst](#) | [all patrons](#) ... you have [notes](#) | [add to my profiles](#)

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED: Funeral service providers; caskets provided by third parties. Eliminates the prohibition on sale or offering for sale of caskets by a person other than a licensed funeral service establishment or funeral service licensee in cases in which preneed funeral arrangements for funeral services are being made. The bill requires funeral service licensees to accept caskets provided by a third party in accordance with the requirements of federal law but makes clear that no funeral service establishment or funeral service licensee may be required to store a casket provided by a third party when preneed arrangements for funeral services have been made.

IFHV has worked with Delegate Hurts to ensure that any and all applicable standards/regulations that are in place for a licensed funeral director would be followed by any third party casket party.

SB 1044 Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Board of; licensing.

Introduced by: [Jeremy S. McPike](#) | [all patrons](#) ... you have [notes](#) | [add to my profiles](#)

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED: Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers; licensing. Clarifies that the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers is authorized to issue separate licenses for (i) funeral director, (ii) embalmer, and (iii) funeral services.

IFHV is working with Senator McPike in an attempt to clarify he defined roles and responsibilities for each license type. If the legislation does not adequately define the proposed roles IFHV will oppose the legislation and ask that the issue be referred to the Board of Health Professions for further study and a recommendation.

HB 479 Death certificate; veterans, fees.

Introduced by: [Terry G. Kilgore](#) | [all patrons](#) ... you have [notes](#) | [add to my profiles](#)

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED: Death certificate; veterans; fees. Expands list of parties eligible to obtain a free certified copy of a veteran's death certificate to include any funeral director or funeral service licensee who provides funeral services to the veteran, if so requested by the surviving spouse of the veteran.

IFHV is actively monitoring this legislation.

SB 422 Health regulatory boards; clarifies the meaning of "license."

Introduced by: [J. Chapman Petersen](#) | [all patrons](#) ... you have [notes](#) | [add to my profiles](#)

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED: Health regulatory boards. Clarifies the meaning of "license" as used by the Boards of Funeral Directors and Embalmers and Physical Therapy and the conditions under which a license may be denied, suspended, or revoked by the Board of Veterinary Medicine.

IFHV is actively monitoring this legislation.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM RICHMOND – A MORE IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION

Despite the headline issues of gun control, ERA abortion, minimum wage increases, the funeral profession faced two prominent issues.

The first was legislation for anybody to sell PRENEED CASKETS- no license, no oversight, and totally unregulated. IFHV worked closely with Delegate Chris Hurst (D-Blacksburg) who introduced the bill as a consumer issue. After further research, we agreed that the FTC Rule does permit any person to sell caskets for preneed. To protect the public and consumers, IFHV lobbyists worked with Delegate Hurst to amend the legislation so that unlicensed persons who sell caskets must comply with the FTC Funeral Rule, and that any violation be considered as practicing the funeral profession without a license. This protected the public and had violations handled by the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers (who had investigative, due process and legal authority already in place.) After VFDA reviewed the language, they joined with IFHV to address one remaining issue. WORKING TOGETHER, IFHV and VFDA lobbyists (with Delegate Hurst's support) amended the bill further to stipulate that preneed casket contracts had to comply with the same disclosure and content requirements which funeral homes must follow (already set out in Virginia law.) While we can't imagine why many will want to purchase a casket preneed, the unlicensed seller will have to comply with the same consumer protections which are required by licensed funeral service professionals.

The other legislation, calls for the Virginia Funeral Board, WITHIN 280 DAYS (upon the bill going into effect on July 1, to adopt regulations to establish a split license for embalming separate from the funeral director license. This intent of the legislation was to address concerns that the Muslim faith did not allow embalming. The bill, carried by Senator Jeremy McPike (D-Woodbridge), was heavily advocated by SCI (Service Corporation, Inc.). VFDA took a "neutral position," noting SCI is an VFDA member, the Virginia Morticians Association opposed the legislation but was not involved. IFHV's position was to oppose the measure unless the legislation included, at least in general, the "scope of practice" of funeral director and also embalmer, AND recommended the issue be resolved through an unbiased thorough study by the Board of Health Professions (which conducts studies on various health professions.) Noting Virginia law already states the Funeral Board may license up to three types of license, and that they have yet to do so... the bill is moving forward after approval by the Senate Committee. IFHV has thus removed their involvement in this legislation and will focus more on the regulations to be developed. Member input will be sought at the March 20 "1 Day CE" conference in Richmond. In short, you can expect "split license" to be implemented in Virginia within a year. What titles are adopted, which title can do what, and what are the educational and competency requirements to be met.... WILL be addressed by regulations.

(note: Due to time restraints, decisions on IFHV legislative positions are determined, during the session, by the IFV President and Legislative Chair. Their guidance and instructions on these two complex issues was most appreciated.)



Overtime

There are **new federal overtime rules**, in effect as of January 1, 2020, that could expose employers to potential violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This is the first time in approximately 15 years that the overtime rule has been changed.

Effective January 1, 2020: https://www.dol.gov/whd/overtime2019/overtime_FS.htm

- the “standard salary level” increases from the currently enforced level of \$455 per week to \$684 per week (equivalent to \$35,568 per year for a full-year worker);
- the total annual compensation requirement for “highly compensated employees” increases from the currently enforced level of \$100,000 per year to \$107,432 per year;
- employers may use non-discretionary bonuses and incentive payments (including commissions) paid at least annually to satisfy up to 10% of the standard salary level, in recognition of evolving pay practices; and
- special salary levels for workers in U.S. territories and the motion picture industry are revised.

The Department of Labor estimates [1.2 million workers](#) will be entitled to overtime pay as a result of the new standard salary level, while an additional 101,800 workers will be entitled to overtime pay as a result of the increase under the highly-compensated employee threshold.

Be sure to **review these new rules** with your human resources department, payroll processor, and legal counsel to remain in compliance with the new law.



*Warfield-Rohr
Casket Co., Inc.*

IFHV MEMBER BENEFIT WITH WARFIELD-ROHR

To show support of Virginia’s independent firms and particularly IFHV members, Warfield-Rohr Casket Company just announced a special casket program just for IFHV firms. The program was reviewed and unanimously endorsed by the IFHV Board of Directors. The Warfield-Rohr Benefit

Program for IFHV Members offers member firms a quantity driven discount plan of up to a combined Terms Discount/Rebate of up to 20%. The rebate program quarters will end on November 30, February 28, May 31 and August 31 of each year.

Quantity of Caskets Purchased	Terms Discount	IFHV Member Rebate	Total Percentage Rebate	Contribution to IFHV per Casket
1 – 25	5%	6%	11%	\$2.00
26 -39	5%	9%	14%	\$2.00
40 – 59	5%	10%	15%	\$2.00
60 – 99	5%	13%	18%	\$2.00
100+	5%	15%	20%	\$2.00

10 Reasons Why Your Funeral Homes and Cemeteries Need More Video in Your Marketing

Jan 2, 2020 1:24:43 PM / by [Ryan Thogmartin](#)

<https://social.disruptmedia.co/blog/10-reasons-why-your-funeral-homes-and-cemeteries-need-more-video-in-your-marketing>

How did your marketing efforts work for you this year? Did you try anything new, or expand certain areas of your budget? Maybe you spent more time updating your social media pages, or enhanced your website. But did you devote any of your time or marketing budget to video? If not, you'll want to make 2020 the year that changes ... and here are 10 hot-off-the-press reasons why, courtesy of *Social Media Today*.

1. Everyone else is doing it

OK, so you're probably hearing your mother's voice in your head. She's saying something like, "If everyone else was jumping off a bridge..." Well, in this case, perhaps your mom doesn't know best. Today, video isn't just for real estate agents and makeup retailers. **86% of businesses now use video on their websites.** That's because people spend 2.6x more time on a page with video content than those without. This means that if someone is visiting your website to read about pre-need options, the time they spend on your page will triple if you add a short video explaining your offerings.

2. Video helps you get found

Your webmaster has probably explained the importance of using the right keywords on your funeral home or cemetery's website. That's because Google and other search engines are more likely to find your website and list it in search results if it contains content that will educate or help the searcher. These days, Google understands that video is educational and helpful, and searchers love video. That's why **your website is more 53 times more likely to show up first on Google's search results page if you have embedded a video.** This leads directly to another amazing statistic: **video increases search traffic to your website by a whopping 157%.**

3. You have tons of options

Are you wondering exactly what kind of video a funeral home or cemetery could make? You truly have a lot of options. Consumers like videos because video helps them learn new things, entertains them, or informs them. Isn't death care a topic many more people need to learn about? You could create videos explaining new cremation options; **95% of people have watched an explainer video to learn more about a product or service.** How about a live video introducing your onsite sympathy store or reception space? **Viewers spend up to 8.1x more time watching live videos than video on demand.** How about a video testimonial from a satisfied family member or an interview with someone on your staff? **51% of marketers consider testimonials effective, while 85% of them are using expert interviews or influencer marketing strategies.**

4. Consumers trust video

Trust is incredibly important in the death care industry. Families are entrusting your firm to be the last to care for their loved one. *Social Media Today* found that **57% of consumers say videos gave them more confidence in a business and its offerings.** They say a picture is worth a thousand words. If that's true, video has to be worth millions. A video of you or the members of your team brings your words, your sincerity, and your dedication to what you do to life.

5. Video drives business

Simply put, video marketing works. **76.5% of marketers and small business owners are getting results with video.** Specifically, they've seen an **84% increase in traffic to their websites** and an **81% increase in lead generation.** If getting someone to your website is half the battle, the other half is getting them to call you or fill out a form requesting more information. With video, your chances of winning that battle — and hearing from that potential pre-need customer — are each increased by over 80%.

6. You can afford it - Maybe a better way to say this is that you can't afford NOT to create videos. **83% of businesses report that video provides a great return on investment. 51% of those say out of all of their online content, video has the best ROI.** Your investment in video doesn't have to be extravagant. People enjoy authentic, on-the-fly videos just as much as (or perhaps more than) slick, highly-edited versions. But if your cemetery spends \$300 to shoot a video highlighting your gorgeous new columbarium and the video results in \$1500 in niche sales, it was a sound investment.

7. People share video - Before technology, word of mouth or referrals were most likely your most effective marketing tools. Sure, people will share negative experiences, but they are also likely to share good ones, or things they like. We're living amidst a sharing economy; people now share rides, homes, and most certainly videos. Statistics show that **people share video 12 times more often than they share text and images combined.** When you make a video, add it to your website and all of your social media platforms, and encourage your followers to share it.

8. Your target audience is watching... - Think only youngsters are watching videos online? Think again. While US internet users aged 18 to 24 make up 96% of YouTube watchers right now, *Social Media Today* says **the 35+ and 55+ age groups are the fastest-growing YouTube demographics.** If you don't already have a YouTube channel, maybe it's time to add it to your social media platforms.

9. ...and they're watching a LOT - The numbers don't lie. People LOVE videos. **78% of Americans watch online videos every week. 55% watch them every day, with 44% watch five or more.** You can take advantage of their addiction to video by creating your own content and posting often to keep their attention. Create some buzz with a Facebook Live tour of your cemetery or funeral home. People fear the unknown, so introducing them to your facility or property through video is one way to ease this apprehension.

10. You don't want to be the last - If you think it would be weird or no one would want to watch a video produced by a funeral home, just Google "funeral home tour" and click the "Videos" option above your search results. You'll get more than three million results. Three MILLION. They're not all professionally produced. Some are just short introductions. But they're getting views. And some of them were first created in 2010, which indicates that if you haven't posted video yet, you may be about ten years late to the game. So start now. Start small. Start inexpensively. But just start posting video. You won't regret it.

IFHV REFERRAL PROGRAM



IFHV has a membership recruitment program that is designed to help grow the IFHV membership and reward our existing members. If you recommend a Funeral Home for IFHV Membership AND they join, then you'll receive 1 free conference registration to either the IFHV 2020 Spring Conference. Fill out the form below and return it to IFHVoffice@gmail.com or 804-643-0311 (Fax).

IFHV MEMBER NAME: _____

IFHV MEMBER EMAIL: _____

IFHV MEMBER PHONE NUMBER: _____

POTENTIAL MEMBER NAME: _____

POTENTIAL MEMBER FIRM: _____

POTENTIAL MEMBER ADDRESS: _____

POTENTIAL MEMBER EMAIL: _____

POTENTIAL MEMBER PHONE: _____

**ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT FUNERAL
HOMES OF VIRGINIA (IFHV)
1 DAY CE CONFERENCE**

REGISTRATION FORM

FRIDAY MARCH 20, 2020

8:00 am – 8:45 am Registration, Breakfast and Exhibits
8:45 am – 9:45 am Virginia Laws & Regulations
 Virginia Board of Funeral Directors
9:45 am – 10:00 am Coffee Break and Exhibits
10:00 am – 11:00 am FTC – Learning From Mistakes
 Regulatory Support Services
11:00 am – 12:00 pm Virginia Preneed Trivia
 Regulatory Support Services
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm Lunch and Exhibits
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm Military Funeral Honors
 Ron Posey, VA State Coordinator
2:15 pm – 3:15 pm Roundtable Discussion – How to
 Proceed with Split Licensure

FRIDAY MARCH 20, 2020

Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Glen Allen, VA

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

Office Phone: _____

Email: _____

Full Registration- IFHV Firm Member (Owners, Managers & all Funeral Service Licensees of an IFHV member firm)

Includes: Continental Breakfast, Exhibits, 5 Hours CE, and Luncheon

\$___ \$150 per IFHV Member, Manager, or Funeral Service Licensee
X___ # of Persons (full registration, including attending education sessions)
\$___ Total

Printed Names for Badges: _____

\$___ **\$25 LATE FEE PER PERSON for Registration RECEIVED AFTER March 1, 2020.**

\$___ **GRAND TOTAL Make Checks Payable to IFHV & Mail with this completed form to IFHV.**

If paying by credit card, fill out all information and send to IFHV by mail or fax. (804-643-0311).

Mailing Address: IFHV – 4461 Cox Road, Suite 110 Glen Allen VA 23060

Check # _____ Check Amount: _____ **OR VISA OR MASTERCARD ONLY**

Name on card (print): _____

Card number: _____ exp date ____/____

Billing Address & City (required): _____

Billing Zip Code (required) _____ Authorized to charge to credit card \$ _____

Signature
(required): _____

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Cremation has replaced traditional burials in popularity in America and people are getting creative with those ashes

By Sandee LaMotte, CNN

Updated 2:17 PM ET, Thu January 23, 2020

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/22/health/cremation-trends-wellness/index.html>



The days of most Americans choosing a casket and traditional graveside burial for their funerals are over.

Cremation became the top choice in 2015 and has been climbing in popularity ever since.

According to statistics from the National Funeral Directors Association, or NFDA,

more than half of all Americans who die this year will be cremated. In 20 years, the association predicts, nearly 80% of us will opt to have our bodies turned into ash.

What happened to change centuries of burial tradition?

"Cost is a driving factor," said Mike Nicodemus, licensed funeral director and vice president of cremation services for the NFDA. "The decrease in religious restrictions is another one, and it's a very transient world we live in today."

A push toward cremation

Funeral costs continue to climb, as do prices for funeral plots and incidentals many people don't know about. For example, some cemeteries may require grave liners, or charge extraordinary amounts just to open the ground for burial.

In 2016, the median cost of a funeral was around \$8,000, according to NFDA statistics; caskets alone cost between \$2,000 and \$10,000. And the prices just keep rising.

The same statistics show the cost of a direct cremation in 2016 was \$2,400.

In addition, families today often live in separate areas of the United States, Nicodemus said, making it more difficult to arrange a timely funeral. It's much easier, he said, to cremate and carry the remains for a later memorial.

On the religious front, the Vatican has been loosening the rules on cremation since the 1960s. Today, practicing Catholics are allowed to choose cremation; however, the church still wants a ceremony and for the [ashes to be buried, not scattered](#).

Changes in overall religious attitudes have also fueled the trend. Fewer people consider themselves religious today than in the past, lessening the need for a traditional funeral in a church.

Today many funeral homes serve as "event planners" for memorial services as well as funerals, Nicodemus said, offering a variety of options and doing most of the organizing.

"Bring in some pictures. Bring in your dad's favorite music. Tell me who you might think would be a good friend of your dad's that might like to get up and say a few words," Nicodemus said. "You bring us your ideas where we'll share ours with you."

As more and more baby boomers have attended these memorials, said Nicodemus, their attitudes have changed.

"They've had family and friends that have passed away and have liked what they've seen at a memorial service," he said. "Then they tell their family, 'I don't want all this funeral stuff. Just have me cremated and have a simple service somewhere.' "

Considering the sheer number of baby boomers, Nicodemus said, those changes in attitude are another major reason for a cultural shift in funeral preferences he believes won't soon change.

"Make no mistake about it, cremation is here to stay," Nicodemus said. "It is the new normal."

What might not be so normal -- yet -- are the creative ways those ashes are being honored.

"Baby boomers, they're not doing what their grandparents did, what their parents did. They're going to do what they're going to do," Nicodemus said.

Memorial art and keepsakes

Doing something memorable and lasting with the cremated ashes of a loved one is a top priority for many people, including baby boomers and their families. A increasing number of companies are offering plenty of imaginative options from which to choose.

Memorial tattoos are a growing trend in which tattoo artists mix some ashes with ink and create lasting memorials on a loved one's skin. If skin isn't your thing, you can also have your ashes mixed with paint and made into a portrait.

Jewelry is easy: You can put bits of your ashes into small containers that are worn around the neck. You can also have your ashes encased in a glass art memorial.

Don't forget the little ones in the family: Some people are having their ashes put into stuffed, huggable animals.

Love music? Become a vinyl record your family can enjoy. One company in the UK that provides the service says you can "record a personal message, your last will & testament, your own soundtrack or simply press your ashes to hear your pops & crackles for the minimal approach."

Don't forget to play your cremated remains at your memorial (or they can arrange a party for a mere 10,000 pounds, or about \$13,135).

'Baby you're a firework'

Some people are taking Katy Perry's powerhouse anthem literally, letting the colors of their remains burst as they shoot across the sky.

"I've seen that; the son sent me pictures," Nicodemus said. "This man's father raised money to put on the annual 4th of July fireworks display in his Kansas town. When he died, there was no one to continue the tradition, but his family raised enough money to put on one last display. Sunset came, the fireworks went off, and there was dad."

A number of companies are advertising specially created professional fireworks displays, but there are also fireworks and rockets that can be shot by the families at home.

A more ethereal experience can be arranged as well: You can choose to have your ashes shot into space. The rockets are real, suppliers say, with options that can send you into orbit around the Earth (\$5,000), the moon (\$12,500) or even to a galaxy far far away (\$12,500). Some of the ashes of actor James Doohan, who played Scotty on the original "Star Trek" television show and subsequent films, took a trip to the International Space Station.

Want to just leave Earth's atmosphere and then come back? That's a mere \$1,300.

Becoming one with the sea

Another alternative becoming increasingly popular, Nicodemus said, is to become a man-made memorial reef.

Cremated ashes are mixed with concrete and poured into a mold, which can then be placed at designated memorial reef locations along the coastline of Florida, North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, Texas and the Coronado Islands near the US-Mexican border.

According to US Funerals Online, which keeps a directory of funeral homes, [costs for a memorial reef](#) range from \$2,400 to \$6,995. If that's too much, for about \$600 you can also place ashes in a smaller reef ball that can be kept at home in a fish tank or water feature.

Or for no extra money at all, you can ask your loved ones to scatter your ashes on the beach.



IFHV Summer Conference

**Virginia Beach Oceanfront
Holiday Inn & Suites North Beach**

August 23-24, 2020

**Rooms available from
\$165/night (plus tax)**

Licensure Renewal Reminders

The funeral service license, funeral director license, or embalmer license shall **expire on March 31** of each calendar year. In order to renew an active funeral service, director or embalmer license, a licensee shall be required to comply with continuing competency requirements set forth in 18VAC65-20-151.

Funeral service licensees, funeral directors or funeral embalmers shall be required to have completed a minimum of five hours per year of continuing education offered by a board-approved sponsor for licensure renewal in courses that emphasize the ethics, standards of practice, preneed contracts and funding, or federal or state laws and regulations governing the profession of funeral service.

One hour per year shall cover compliance with laws and regulations governing the profession, and at least one hour per year shall cover preneed funeral arrangements. The one-hour requirement on compliance with laws and regulations may be met once every two years by attendance at a meeting of the board or at a committee of the board or an informal conference or formal hearing.

Courses must be directly related to the scope of practice of funeral service. Courses for which the principal purpose is to promote, sell or offer goods, products or services to funeral homes are not acceptable for the purpose of credit toward renewal.

REMiNDER



4461 Cox Road, Suite 110
Glen Allen, VA 23060