



Audley Medical Practice
www.audleyhealthcentre.co.uk

30 June 2015

Bradwell Crematorium
Chatterley Close
Bradwell
Newcastle under Lyme
Staffs
ST5 8LA

Dear Doctors

I have recently been appointed as Medical Referee at Bradwell Crematorium and having reviewed a good number of Form 4 and Form 5's I wonder if you could circulate this letter to all your Doctors and perhaps include it as part of your induction/locum folder.

Cremation forms are legal documents and are kept for 15 years.

The cremation regulations were updated in 2008 and were implemented in January 2009. The vast majority of form 4 and form 5 are correctly completed. However I felt it important to write to you to update Doctors, particularly about the increase in number of battery powered and other implants that could cause problems during cremation.

Below is a summary that you may find helpful.

1. All questions on forms 4 and 5 should be answered.
2. All forms should be completely legible.
3. Form cremation 4 should only be completed by a Medical Practitioner who has treated the deceased during their last illness and who has seen him or her within 14 days of death. If the main treating Medical Practitioner has gone on leave or fallen ill it may be possible for another Medical Practitioner to complete form 4, but only in exceptional circumstances.
4. Modes of death such as multi organ failure or heart attack are not acceptable and the proper cause of death must be stated. Guidance on death certification is discussed on the GMC and MDU website, but for more detailed information please read the guidance on http://www.gro.gov.uk/images/medcert_July_2010.pdf
5. Old age as a standalone cause of death for over 80's is acceptable with evidence in the narrative box. Old age is commonly given as a cause of death where the deceased has been suffering from a number of conditions leading to death and where it has not been possible to decipher which condition lead to the death. It must not be used when the cause of death is unascertained. Old age can be used of a cause of death in the under 80's but only with good evidence in the narrative box.
6. Cremation 5 Medical Practitioner's must be fully registered for at least 5 years and cannot be a Partner or colleague in the same practice or clinical team of the Doctor who issued form cremation 4. The two Medical Practitioners must be truly independent of one another. For true independence please try and vary the second doctor.
7. Similarly, if the deceased died in hospital and the Medical Practitioner filling in form 4 is based in the hospital the deceased GP cannot sign form cremation 5.

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8. Abbreviations for cause of death are unacceptable and causes such as Cerebrovascular Accident must be qualified as non traumatic
 9. Please make sure the narrative section is legible.
- Question 12 and 13: The Coroner does consider that invasive diagnostic procedures could have contributed towards the cause of death and therefore you need to discuss this with the Coroner first.
10. Questions 14, 15 and 16. Specific names and contact details should be given and an unnamed Nurse or family member with no contact details is of no particular value.

Question 23. Removal of implants. The following battery powered and other implants could cause problems during cremation, and the list is getting longer:

Pacemakers,
implantable cardioverter defibrillators,
cardiac resynchronisation therapy devices,
implantable loop recorders,
left ventricular assist devices, right ventricular assist devices or bi ventricular assist devices,
implantable drug pumps including intrathecal pumps,
neuro-stimulators including for pain and functional electrical stimulation,
bone growth stimulators,
hydrocephalus programmable shunts, any other battery powered implant,
fixion nails,
brachytherapy to the prostate ie: radioactive iodine 125 seeds, advice is that they can cause radiation for up to one year and if death occurs within 12 months following implantation the seeds should be removed.

11. For both form 4 and form 5 the Doctors name must be in full and in capitals and legible.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sharon Turner FRCGP

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