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Cremation Information Return of Cremated Remains

In compliance with Texas Administrative Code §479.4, the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Paul L. Foster School of Medicine will agree to return the available cremated human remains of an individual person ONLY under the conditions presented in this agreement.

When a body is donated to science in the state of Texas, it reaches its permanent and final legal destination when it arrives at the institution to which it is donated. In this case, that institution is the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. The relevant statute is contained in the Health and Safety Codes of the state of Texas, §691. A body that is donated to science at TTUHSC El Paso may be used in health education, research or both. In the process of education and/or research, parts of the body may be completely destroyed, or they may be kept for teaching purposes. These parts will NOT be available for cremation.

Cremation is a non-reversible process in which human remains are burned in gas flame at a temperature of about 1800°F. At this temperature, all soft parts of the body vaporize and only burned bone remains. The pieces of burned bone are removed and processed to resemble ash or sand. These processed cremated human remains become the “ashes,” which can be returned, if requested.

The cremated remains of all individuals that are not returned will be irretrievably co-mingled and buried with the cremated remains of other individuals. The burial location will be disclosed to the next of kin upon request.

When the cremated remains of an individual human ARE to be returned, the crematory is cleaned thoroughly before cremation and the available remains of only one human body are cremated at any given time. After the cremation, the machine is thoroughly cleaned and the cremated remains are processed for return. The approximate wait time for the return of cremated remains is estimated to be around two years from the date of death. The actual time between donation and the availability of cremated remains varies, depending upon several factors. It is our goal to keep the time it takes for the next of kin to receive the cremated remains as short as possible but it should be understood that the donation process takes time and there is no means of expediting that process.

In order to provide the extra services associated with the return of available cremated human remains of an individual, a fee of \$150 is charged for all individuals whose donor forms were signed after January 1, 2004.