

**Cremation Association of North America and  
International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association  
Statement on Non-Organic Waste Recycling**

**Background**

Recycling is the process of taking useful waste materials and making new products from them. The Cremation Association of North America (CANA) and International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCF) embrace environmentally friendly efforts that are consistent with our members' business missions. Recycling is credited with extending the long-term availability of natural resources, reducing industrial production impact on the environment and conserving energy.

Non-Organic waste recovered in the cremation process occurs both pre and post-cremation and includes, but is not limited to: casket hardware, orthopedic and dental implants, pacemakers and defibrillators. The recovered items are both metal and non-metal in composition.

Pre-Cremation items include: Pacemakers, defibrillators and other battery powered implants and should be removed before cremation, sanitized and returned to the manufacturer. Other pre-cremation waste may include casket ornamentation such as handles, and, if non-combustible should be removed prior to cremation and recycled according to cremation provider specifications. There are certain items of the deceased, such as gold teeth, which a family may request. Any item that a family requests from a deceased should be obtained pre-cremation and through applicable consents, releases, authorizations, and proper third-party involvement.

Post-cremation items include mostly metallic waste and should be recovered following the cremation process, packaged and recycled according to cremation provider specifications. Metal recycling providers ("Providers" are companies, both profit and non-profit, that provide recycling services to the deathcare profession; recycling services include the actual receipt of non-organic waste material from the cremation process as collected by the crematory, funeral home, and/or cemetery) may operate on the local or national level and generally operate under the following business models:

- Single-stream recycling – place all recovered materials in one container and return to provider per instructions.
- Specific metallic types – separate and place specific metals in containers per provider instructions.

**Suggested Guidelines**

- 1) Compliance- Before participating in a recycling program, members must carefully check state and provincial laws to ensure it is permissible to recycle any and all non-organic materials including metal.
- 2) Disclosure - the intent to recycle non-organic waste and any financial proceeds from this process should be clearly disclosed to the person(s) with the right to control disposition. This consent could be a part of the cremation authorization and disposition form, which each family completes, or it could be an additional form for the purpose of recycling. The crematory's existing cremation authorization forms should be reviewed and updated as needed to reflect current practice.
- 3) Procedure – members should have a written procedure identifying its practices as it relates to the collection of both pre-cremation non-organic materials and post-cremation non-organic materials. This written procedure should identify any and all needed releases and signatures from the proper parties.
- 4) Compensation – non-organic waste, including metals, may have monetary value. The owner(s) of the crematory or the party recycling the waste, must determine a compensation policy in line with their disclosed practices and governing laws. Any disclosed revenue may be accepted as an income stream, donated to a recognized charitable organization or redeemed for goods or services in provider-sponsored programs.