

LICENSED INDUSTRY OVERVIEW: FUNERAL SERVICES IN BC

OVERVIEW

Consumers making end-of-life choices for their family members can be assured that there are laws in BC. In British Columbia, funeral sector professionals and the services they offer are governed under the [Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act](#) (BPCPA), the [Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act](#) (CIFSA) and the [Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Regulation](#). This includes the licensing of cemetery and crematorium operators, funeral providers, funeral directors, funeral embalmers and apprentices.

THE FUNERAL SERVICES LAW IN BC

Consumer Protection BC inspects and enforces the laws and regulations specific to funeral services. The law protects consumers by:

- Requiring detailed contracts of funeral services to be provided
- Requiring proper authorizations are in place prior to funeral services being delivered
- Requiring businesses to meet prescribed facility requirements
- Requiring the respectful handling of human remains

2019 - 2021: CREMATION, INTERMENT & FUNERAL SERVICES IN BC BY THE NUMBERS

**Please note that all statistics below are all-encompassing for BC's cremation, interment and funeral services sectors.*

Licensed places, activities and occupations:

BC-licensed crematorium, cemetery and funeral service providers	2019	2020	2021
	1,071	1,122	1,184

Consumer inquiries:

- 2019: There were 292 inquiries about the funeral sector, representing 3% of all calls and emails (11,221). Topics of interest included:
 1. General inquiry (16% of funeral sector-related inquiries)
 2. General complaints (16%)
 3. Contract cancellation (12%)
 4. Quality of service (9%)
- 2020: There were 240 inquiries about the funeral sector, representing 2% of all calls and emails (15,423). Topics of interest included:
 1. General inquiry (25% of funeral sector-related inquiries)
 2. General complaints (10%)
 3. Inquiries related to funeral services laws (13%)
 4. Licence status (8%)

- 2021: There were 310 inquiries about the funeral sector, representing 2% of all calls and emails (10,923). Topics of interest included:
 1. General inquiry (24% of funeral sector-related inquiries)
 2. CIFSA related inquiry (15%)
 3. Private transfer permit (13%)
 4. General complaints (8%)

Investigations:

- 2019: There were a total of 24 funeral-related investigation files. Of those, 19 files concluded with an outcome and 5 files were incomplete, unfounded or referred elsewhere. Of those 19 files with an outcome, 15 enforcement actions were taken, and voluntary compliance was achieved in 4 cases.
- 2020: There were a total of 11 funeral-related investigation files. Of those, 8 files concluded with an outcome and 3 files were incomplete, unfounded or referred elsewhere. Of those 8 files with an outcome, 7 enforcement actions were taken, and voluntary compliance was achieved in 1 case.
- 2021: There were a total of 44 funeral-related investigation files. Of those, 35 files concluded with an outcome and 9 files were incomplete, unfounded or referred elsewhere. Of those 35 files with an outcome, 34 enforcement actions were taken, and voluntary compliance was achieved in 1 case.

Contraventions when enforcement action was taken	2019	2020	2021	Total
	15	7	34	56
Providing false or misleading info, failure to provide info or comply	1	0	2	3
Failing to meet requirements of price list of all goods and services	0	1	0	1
Failing to provide accurate information when receiving an inquiry about the nature or price of cemetery or funeral services or memorials	1	0	0	1
Failing to include required contents in funeral contracts	2	1	0	3
Failing to include required contents in preneed cemetery or funeral services contracts	3	1	1	5
Failing to deposit money into preneed trust account within 5 days of receipt	1	0	3	4
Unlawfully offering a right of interment on a representation or inducement of resale at a profit	0	0	1	1
Failing to include required contents in interment right contracts	1	0	0	1
Failing to give a copy of the interment right contract to the consumer within 15 days	0	0	1	1
Committing or engaging in a deceptive act or practice	1	0	1	2
Providing funeral services or disposition without written authorization	0	2	0	2
Failing to state business address or affiliation to a corporation in marketing materials	0	1	0	1
Failing to handle human remains in a respectful manner	0	1	0	1
Crematorium operators failing to get approval before adding, modifying or replacing an appliance	1	0	0	1

Funeral providers failing to meet their obligations	1	0	1	2
Failing to meet requirements of displaying containers for sale	2	0	0	2
Failing to meet continuing education requirements	0	0	22	22
Failing to submit reports on preneed or funeral services contracts	0	0	2	2
Failing to meet the report submission due dates	1	0	0	1

BUSINESS OBLIGATIONS AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

By law, funeral service providers:

- Must not provide funeral services unless they have received authorization from the person who, under the law, has [the right to control the disposition of the human remains](#).
- Are not allowed to phone consumers or come to a consumers' home to sell funeral arrangements unless invited to do so (and if the consumer decides to do so, the request must be made at least 24 hours in advance).
- Must include specific information in funeral services contracts, including an itemized listing of all goods and services purchased and any other costs involved. With a prepaid funeral contract, consumers have cancellation rights.
- Must display, and provide a clear schedule of rates, if requested.
- Must follow specific provisions for preneed funeral services contracts, including the requirement that prepaid money be held in trust.

CONSUMER TIPS

- 1. Check licensing status.** By law, anyone offering funeral services in BC must be licensed. Visit Consumer Protection BC's website to [check a licence](#).
- 2. Ask what services are included in the price.** To be an informed consumer, read your contract carefully (keep a signed copy, too) and find out what is included and what is extra. For example, the cost for funeral services often does not include the sale of a cemetery lot, a grave or a memorial marker (such as a headstone, tombstone, monument or plaque).
- 3. Share the details of your wishes.** Let your loved ones know your wishes. If you purchased a preneed cemetery or funeral services contract, share the details with your family and ensure the information is in your will. Remember that under BC's consumer protection laws that you have preneed contract cancellation rights, too.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

To maintain the integrity of our investigative processes, we do not share detailed information about open files. Visit the [Enforcement Actions section of our website](#) to explore our recent licensing and enforcement actions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Explore www.consumerprotectionbc.ca for more information for both consumers and regulated businesses. Additional statistical information is also available in our [Annual Reports](#). We also share information and consumer tips on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and in [our corporate blog](#).