



CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

Information for Funeral Directors:

The Green Burial Society of Canada offers certification of Funeral Services (individual Funeral Homes). Licenced Funeral Services establishments are welcome to apply for the designation: "Green Burial Funeral Services".

The Goal of the Green Burial Society of Canada is to:

- Advocate for the adoption of environmentally responsible and ecologically sustainable interment and funeral services in communities across Canada.
- Assist organizations, businesses, individuals, and governments across Canada to adapt and implement green burial standards and best practices for the provision of environmentally responsible, ecologically sensitive death care practices in their community.
- Establish standards and best practices that recognize cemetery and funeral service businesses in Canada who commit to providing their goods and services in accordance with the standards, goals, and objectives of the GBSC.
- Promote at every opportunity, the values, goals, and objectives of the GBSC throughout Canada and, with other like-minded organizations; foster the mutual exchange of ideas and discussions in the advancement of green burial
- Work in collaboration with local, provincial, territorial, and international green burial organizations, as well as like-minded organizations that support and seek to advance environmentally based death care practices.

Benefits of Certification: Upon successful certification, a Funeral Services establishment will receive:

- The right to use the terms "GBSC Green Burial Funeral Services Certified"
- Use of Green Burial Society of Canada's logos and web link for marketing their establishment.
- National exposure through the posting of their business on the GBSC's map and through information about their establishment featured on the GBSC's website.
- Promotion of certified green burial funeral services through the GBSC's social media.
- Information about certified green burial funeral services being provided, as appropriate, to people who contact the GBSC for direction and advice about green burial.
- Opportunities to participate as hosts or sponsors of GBSC's events, including at the AGM.
- The right to vote for the GBSC Executive at each AGM.
- Access to periodic newsletters on issues and topics relevant to green burial.
- Mentorship from Board members.

Fees:

Costs per Funeral Home site:

Application fee (for vetting by the GBSC Board of Directors): \$150

Annual Certification fee: \$300



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Green Burial Funeral Services:

The Green Burial movement is not simply an environmental cause. The values and ethics of the Green Burial movement include good communication with families and colleagues, thoughtful and unique funeral ceremonies, and conscientious business practices.

For Green Burial Funeral Service providers, meetings with families may take longer than you are used to because these ideas are new again. We ask that members take the time to explain options to families so they know what decisions they are making and what the service will be like. Information should be shared to educate and empower family members to make good decisions for the deceased, their families, friends, and for the earth. For example, shrouding versus a casket, family as pallbearers or not, filling the grave by hand or machine. These decisions should be informed and considered. Photos of other green burials can help.

A Green Burial also benefits from collaboration between colleagues. A good professional relationship between the Funeral home and the Cemetery is essential. This looks like all parties being clear on the choices a family has made for the burial service – who is carrying the deceased, who is lowering, who is filling the grave? It's important that there is a sense that everyone is working together to create the best experience for the family. Communication is the key.

There is not a set structure for a Green Burial. People may want to include rituals that have not been aspects of conventional burials, such as singing, painting the casket, adorning the shroud with flowers and greenery, and sharing food and drinks. The Green Burial Funeral Service provider needs to be open-minded to allow for ceremonies that support the deceased and their community, whatever that may be.

The Green Burial Funeral Service establishment is encouraged to develop business practices that are conscientious to the environment, customers and the larger community. This may mean using electric vehicles, planting trees as a team, and using reusable or recyclable cups and dishes in your office and at funerals. We encourage Funeral Services establishments to offer bereavement services to their families, allow families to participate in washing and dressing their loved ones, and staff people might volunteer at environmental or social support services in the community.



CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

Basic Green Burial Criteria:

The following five (5) criteria are the baseline criteria that any site must meet before it can claim to offer “Green” or “Natural” Burial and be eligible to apply for GBSC Certification of a site of any size.

- 1. The BODY:** Remains for green burial must be in a natural state to permit natural, unimpeded decomposition. Arterial embalming, in any form, is not permitted. Medical implants may remain in place.
- 2. The CONTAINER:** Remains for burial must be enclosed in a fully biodegradable shroud, casket or other container. Ideally, the container will be made from locally sourced, sustainably produced materials that are free of nonorganic glues and/or fittings.
- 3. The BURIAL:** Remains will be placed and buried directly into the earth. Use of any outer burial container, such as a rough-box, grave liner, or vault of any type is not permitted.
- 4. The MEMORIAL:** Memorials may be communal or individual. Ideally, they would be made of locally sourced materials, such as stone or wood, and be minimally intrusive in the landscape.
- 5. The CEMETERY:** The Cemetery shall choose sound ecological practices on the land, and act as a resource for green burial education in the community.

Green Burial Funeral Services Criteria:

In addition to meeting all the **BASIC GREEN BURIAL CRITERIA** above, to be eligible to be certified as Green Burial Funeral Services, an establishment must fulfill at least **twenty-two** (22) of the following thirty (30) criteria:

- Only all natural, non-toxic soaps and cleaning materials are used on the body.
- Plastic body bags, bandages, medical equipment and diapers (if used) are removed and properly disposed of.
- If desired, the family is welcome to participate in washing and dressing the deceased.
- Clothing is made from biodegradable materials such as cotton, linen or wool, without the use of plastics or metals, including accessories such as jewelry.
- Shrouds and/or caskets are made by locally sourced materials (within 200 kms) by craftspeople without the use of metals, plastics or chemicals, such as paint or other synthetic finishes.
- A morgue, cooler, temperature controlled atmosphere, or ice packs are used to lengthen the time between death and burial.
- The funeral home uses electric or hybrid vehicles.
- When possible the funeral home promotes green burials in the obituary.
- Safe and dignified transportation is used, particularly with a shroud interment, i.e. the deceased is supported with a stretcher or tray.



CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

- A backboard or tray made of natural materials is provided with shrouds for interment.
- There is a GBSC certified Green Burial Cemetery within 100kms.
- All green burial regulations at the cemetery are honoured.
- The grave is decorated with local greenery and cut flowers, not astro-turf nor plastic arrangements.
- There is a willingness to collaborate with other funeral directors to support a green burial.
- Steps are taken to make the burial as environmentally friendly and dignified as possible.
- Family and friends are welcome to participate in the burial by being pallbearers, lowering, and/or filling in the grave.
- A burial ceremony is supported, highlighting the elements of nature, and the green burial process and concept.
- Carbon credits are purchased to offset your business' carbon emissions by funding projects that reduce or remove CO₂ from the atmosphere (especially when staff travel long distances by car or airplane).
- Reusable or recyclable cups and plates are used at the funeral.
- The funeral home aims to minimize waste by reusing materials, avoiding single-use plastics, and implementing recycling programs in the office or facility.
- All staff members are educated about green burial options and practices; continuing education is accessed through the GBSC or provincial association/regulators.
- The funeral home participates in public awareness and publicity of green burial options and practices.
- The funeral director is supportive of home vigils/funerals.
- Marketing of green burials is done with integrity, honesty and advocacy.
- Online marketing: promote green burial options once a month.
- The funeral home offers bereavement support for families.
- Willing to reduce electricity consumption with energy-efficient upgrades, turning off computers and lights when not in use.
- Have a dedicated page on your company's website that highlights green burials.
- As a business, commit to planting a tree each year (independently or through an organization).
- Have a representative attend the GBSC's AGM (virtually or in person).

Green Burial Society of Canada Ethical Standards:

- I have read and agree to the GBSC Ethical Standards.