

## **CHEAT SHEET: What Every FCA Volunteer Needs to Know and Where to Find it!**

One of the things the national staff love about our jobs is being able to talk personally to so many of the volunteers that make up Funeral Consumers Alliance. Unlike massive nonprofit organizations, we're not walled off behind an army of secretaries and voicemail trees. We've met many of you, and we know most of you by phone and email. We're glad to be the people you call when you want to report news, offer tips, or ask for help.

But there is a price to pay for having such a close-knit organization. Your national staff is made up of just two full-time people and one part-timer. By contrast, there are more than 900 FCA affiliate board members and volunteers. That's a lot for three people to keep up with! Through our publications and Web site, we've made it easy to get up-to-date information instantly at home without having to write a letter or place a phone call. Don't get us wrong—we **love** hearing from you, but it can be very time-consuming to answer basic questions repeatedly when the information is out there for the taking.

With that in mind, every affiliate board member **should clip this sheet and keep next to the phone**, or in your FCA file. Check this list first for basic questions— if it's not answered here, give us a ring or drop a line by email.

**WHAT: I need the number for an FCA in another state.**

**WHERE:** Our national directory is always up to date online at [www.funerals.org/directry.htm](http://www.funerals.org/directry.htm) (yes, with that misspelling. Long story; don't ask). You can also download a printable, four-fold copy, suitable for distribution.

**WHAT: I need an updated list/copies of your pamphlets.**

**WHERE:** The list of pamphlets, their text, and downloadable, printable tri-fold masters are at [www.funerals.org/faq](http://www.funerals.org/faq). If you have trouble with the downloadable versions, call us for a set of paper masters or a bulk order of pre-printed pamphlets (but **do** check the site first – it's easy, trust us).

**WHAT: I need to order more Before I Go Kits/Books for our affiliate.**

**WHERE:** Email assistant Leda Nutting at [leda@funerals.org](mailto:leda@funerals.org). She processes and ships all affiliate orders. We'll invoice you. Give Leda a lift and send a funeral joke along with your order – she loves a laugh.

**WHAT: Who are the national FCA board members and staff, and how can I reach them personally?**

**WHERE:** The board and staff list, along with contact information, is at [www.funerals.org/board.htm](http://www.funerals.org/board.htm).

**WHAT: I have a member who needs to know the law about embalming/shipping/funeral shopping.**

**WHERE:** First, each affiliate **must** be responsible for knowing the funeral law in their state. This is not optional, it's not "something to leave for the national office," it's a **basic duty** of operating a Funeral Consumers Alliance. With state laws online now, and with books on the subject readily available, there's no longer any excuse for not knowing what your state permits and requires. Knowing your state law will make you more confident, effective, and respected among your membership. So check out:

- *Caring for the Dead: Your Final Act of Love*, by Lisa Carlson. The book is a state-by-state manual of funeral and burial law for the consumer. Since it was published in 1998, the national office keeps a list of changes to state law as we find out about them. You can order the book from us, and we'll send you an email or paper copy of the updates. This book is the bible of funeral law and should be on every affiliate's shelf. To order, go to [www.funerals.org/bookstore](http://www.funerals.org/bookstore)
- Your state legislature's Web site. Every state but Pennsylvania has its laws and regulations online. To find your state's site, go to Google and type in (for example) "Maryland Legislature." The first link that comes up will usually be your state's legislative Web site, where you can search and print out laws and regulations. If you're a first-timer looking at laws, Josh Slocum is happy to consult and offer advice. Email him at [joshua@funerals.org](mailto:joshua@funerals.org).

The BEST RESOURCE for FCA affiliates is our 100-page **Guidebook for Running a Funeral Consumers**  
(over)

**Alliance.** This bound book compiles all the best wisdom from funeral consumer groups around the country, as well as advice from the national organization. When you have a question, consult the **Guidebook** first. Here's a sampling of what it contains:

**Chapter 1**

Organization structure

Operating procedures

**Chapter 2**

Consumer activism or a buyer's club?

Officer duties

Sample Bylaws

Incorporating in your state

**Chapter 3**

Cooperating mortuaries – benefits and pitfalls

Sample funeral home agreement form

Monitoring member satisfaction

**Chapter 4**

Nuts and Bolts of Running an Alliance

Executive committee

Membership records and mail list

Reciprocity and transfer of membership

**Chapter 5**

Finances

Membership fees

Dues

Your quarterly contribution to FCA

**Chapter 6**

Federal Income Tax Exemption

How to achieve 501(c)(3) status with the IRS

**Chapter 7**

The FTC Funeral Rule

Monitoring state legislation

The state funeral board

**Chapter 8**

Publicity and Outreach

Newsletters

Speakers bureau

**Chapter 9**

Annual Meetings

Parliamentary procedure

**Chapter 10**

Relations with FCA

The FCA newsletter

The biennial conference

**Chapter 11**

Web sites with downloadable information

Pamphlets available from FCA

Books and videos to build your reference library

Guide to Building Publicity for Affiliates with sample press releases

**Appendices**

FCA National Bylaws

Guide to Writing a Newsletter