



Regulation and Licensing Department
New Mexico Funeral Services Board
2550 Cerillos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Re: Proposed Amendments to NMAC 16.64.4.9 and 16.64.4.10

Dear Members of the New Mexico Funeral Services Board:

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed rule changes to NMAC 16.64.4.9 and 16.64.4.10. I respect the Board's responsibility to ensure public safety, professionalism, and accountability within the funeral services industry; however, several of the proposed amendments would create unnecessary burdens, reduce accountability for licensed professionals, and undermine the safety and public health standards to which we should be held.

As licensed funeral service professionals, we are deeply concerned about any proposed reduction or alteration to the minimum size and equipment requirements for chapels, casket selection rooms, and especially preparation rooms. These standards were established to protect public health, ensure ethical care of the deceased, and provide families with safe, dignified, and appropriate spaces during their time of need.

Reducing the minimum square footage of chapels or casket selection rooms would diminish the ability of establishments to adequately serve families, particularly during larger services or when multiple family members need space to gather, grieve, and make informed choices. Crowded or undersized facilities directly compromise the quality of care and undermine the professional environment expected of licensed providers.

Most critically, any relaxation of preparation-room requirements introduces potential risks to sanitation, worker safety, and the proper handling of human remains. Preparation rooms must maintain strict standards for ventilation, drainage, equipment, and workflow to protect both the public and the professionals who perform embalming and restorative services. Loosening these requirements may lower operational costs for some, but it does so at the expense of health standards, professional integrity, and the respectful treatment of the deceased.

The proposed amendments also eliminate the longstanding requirement that the licensee in charge reside within a 90-minute travel radius of the establishment, replacing it with the far less practical requirement that the licensee simply “reside in New Mexico.” This change removes a clear, measurable standard of accessibility and substitutes a broad requirement that does not ensure proximity, availability, or timely response in emergencies. A licensee could legally reside anywhere in the state, potentially hundreds of miles away, while lacking any realistic ability to oversee daily operations. This revision does not improve public safety; instead, it introduces ambiguity, weakens accountability, and creates inconsistencies in enforcement. Retaining a clearly defined travel time requirement ensures that the licensee in charge can reasonably respond to the needs of the establishment and the families it serves.

Additionally, to address General Provision 16.64.6.8 regarding continuing education. I believe the Board needs to continue to provide a list of approved continuing education programs that are acceptable for license renewal, maintaining an official list of approved continuing education programs would better support licensees in meeting their obligations, ensure that education remains relevant and rigorous, and ultimately protect the public by ensuring that funeral service professionals remain properly trained and informed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to withdraw the proposed amendments to 16.64.4.9 and 16.64.4.10. I encourage the Board to engage in further dialogue with practitioners to develop revisions that support safety without lowering the standards to which New Mexico families are accustomed.

Thank you for your time and for considering my comments. I appreciate the work the Board does to uphold professional standards while serving the people of New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Rebecca S. Gentry, FSP 970

*303 N. Cedar St.
P.O. Box 112
Truth or Consequences, NM 87901
Telephone
(575) 894-2574
Facsimile
(575) 894-6815*