

INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS DEPARTMENT[481]

Adopted and Filed

Rulemaking related to practice and licensure of funeral directors, funeral establishments, and cremation establishments

The Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing hereby amends Chapter 900, “Practice of Funeral Directors, Funeral Establishments, and Cremation Establishments,” and Chapter 901, “Licensure of Funeral Directors, Funeral Establishments, and Cremation Establishments,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code chapters 17A, 147, 156 and 272C.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapters 147, 156 and 272C.

Purpose and Summary

This rulemaking sets minimum standards for licensure as a funeral director or establishment in Iowa, as well as standards for registration as a removal technician. The purpose of this rulemaking is to correct citations within the rules and to change procedures for removal technicians. The current removal technician rules have been in place for the past year, and now that they have been utilized, the Board of Mortuary Science acknowledges necessary changes to assist in allowing removal technicians to assist funeral directors in Iowa.

Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on April 15, 2026, as **ARC 0201D**.

Public comment was received from the Iowa Funeral Directors Association (IFDA):

“As it stands, the primary benefit of moving to six per establishment appears to favor larger firms if we don’t make the necessary change to allow 3 per director. The intent and this effort were initiated to ensure rural funeral homes, many with limited staff, could access meaningful support. They way I see it if the move from 4-6 six per establishment can be changed it can also be adjusted to 3 per director up to 6 max per establishment.

“For clarity, the state already distinguishes between full-time and part-time employees, and we should be applying that distinction here. The funeral director needs a [full-time] FT employee. I strongly believe we should require clear employment specifications just as we do with removal techs. From what I see regularly in training, many removal technicians are part-time and not consistently available. Many are students from DMACC. If there is concern about the risk of supervising more than two part-time, as-needed technicians, then it stands to reason that we should also be concerned about supervision by individuals who are part-time, retired, or not formally employed by the establishment. There is current abuse of how this position is being handled and by whom because the rules are too gray. This is not protecting the public.

“Referencing another email where someone stated that with technology (Zoom, Facetime, etc.) we shouldn’t regulate the full-time status. While those things are useful tools, it should not be used to justify loosening standards around supervision and should not be criteria when determining working status of a funeral director.

“These rules were created by the Board of Mortuary Science under the authority granted by the legislation. That same authority allows for them to be revisited and refined which is what we have been

working on for the past year. Given the original intent and the reality we are seeing in practice, I believe that's exactly what should happen."

One change from the Notice has been made to update paragraph 901.13(4)"d" in Item 12 to allow three removal technicians to be supervised instead of two.

Adoption of Rulemaking

This rulemaking was adopted by the Board on June 9, 2026.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Board for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 7—Chapter 2504.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

Effective Date

This rulemaking will become effective on September 9, 2026.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Rescind subrule **900.4(4)**.

ITEM 2. Adopt the following **new** paragraphs **900.6(3)"d"** and **900.6(3)"e"**:

d. When death is attributed to a reportable communicable disease, embalming may be omitted provided that cremation is performed within 48 hours after death. In such cases, the human remains shall be immediately topically disinfected, shall be placed in a container that will control odor and prevent the leakage of body fluids and shall only be transported to the crematory by the funeral director or intern.

e. If viewing of the unembalmed human remains is requested, the human remains shall be topically disinfected and all body orifices shall be packed or otherwise secured with material that will absorb and retain all secretions. No public viewing will be allowed of an unembalmed decedent who has died of a reportable communicable disease, but private viewing is permissible at the discretion of the funeral director.

ITEM 3. Amend rule **481—901.1(156)**, definition of "Reactivate," as follows:

"*Reactivate*" or "*reactivation*" means the process as outlined in rule **481—901.11(17A,147,272C)** **481—901.10(17A,147,272C)** by which an inactive license is restored to active status.

ITEM 4. Amend subrule 901.3(1) as follows:

901.3(1) *Internship.*

a. to *j.* No change.

~~k. The intern will complete on a form provided by the board a confidential evaluation of the preceptorship program at the end of the internship. This form will be submitted before a funeral director license is issued to the intern.~~

~~k.~~ k. The intern must be approved and licensed following a successful internship before the intern may practice mortuary science.

ITEM 5. Amend paragraph **901.5(1)“k”** as follows:

k. Failure to comply with any of these rules will constitute grounds for discipline pursuant to 481—Chapter 904 and 481—Chapter 504 or civil penalties for unlicensed practice pursuant to 481—Chapter 905.

ITEM 6. Amend rule 481—901.9(17A,147,272C) as follows:

481—901.9(17A,147,272C) Reinstatement of a funeral establishment license or a cremation establishment license. For a funeral or cremation establishment license that has been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered, the owner must apply for and receive reinstatement of the license in accordance with rule ~~481—506.31(272C)~~ 481—506.32(272C) and must apply for and be granted reactivation of the license in accordance with rule ~~481—901.9(272C)~~ 481—901.10(17A,147,272C) prior to offering mortuary science services from that establishment in this state.

ITEM 7. Amend subparagraph **901.10(2)“a”(3)** as follows:

(3) Verification of completion of two hours of continuing education in current Iowa law and rules covering mortuary science content areas including, but not limited to, Iowa law and rules governing the practice of mortuary science, cremation, vital statistics, cemeteries and preneed. These 2 hours will be included as a part of the 24 hours required in ~~subparagraph 901.11(3)“a”(2).~~ 481—paragraph 902.3(2)“f.”

ITEM 8. Amend subparagraph **901.10(2)“b”(2)** as follows:

(2) Verification of completion of 48 hours of continuing education that meet continuing education standards defined in 481—subrule 902.3(1) and 481—paragraphs 902.3(2)“a,” “b,” “c,” and “e,” within two years prior to filing the application for reactivation. Independent study identified in ~~481—paragraph 902.3(2)“f”~~ 481—paragraph 902.3(2)“d” will not exceed 24 hours of the 48 hours; and

ITEM 9. Amend rule 481—901.11(17A,147,272C) as follows:

481—901.11(17A,147,272C) Reinstatement of a funeral director license. A licensee whose license has been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered must apply for and receive reinstatement of the license in accordance with rule ~~481—506.31(272C)~~ 481—506.32(272C) and must apply for and be granted reactivation of the license in accordance with rule ~~481—901.11(17A,147,272C)~~ 481—901.10(17A,147,272C) prior to practicing as a funeral director in this state. The owner of a funeral home establishment whose establishment license has been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered must apply for and receive reinstatement of the establishment license and must apply for and be granted reactivation of the establishment license prior to reopening the funeral home establishment.

ITEM 10. Amend subrule 901.13(1) as follows:

901.13(1) A removal technician will serve under the direct supervision of an Iowa licensed funeral director, will only perform removals at the direction of the supervising funeral director, and may act in place of a funeral director only in performing a removal. Another funeral director, who is authorized by the supervising funeral director, may direct the removal technician in the temporary absence of the supervising funeral director.

ITEM 11. Amend paragraph **901.13(2)“c”** as follows:

c. Is ~~affiliated with~~ employed by a funeral establishment that has not had any formal disciplinary action within the past five years.

ITEM 12. Amend subrule 901.13(4) as follows:

901.13(4) The supervising funeral director will:

- a.* and *b.* No change.
- c.* Ensure the removal technician performs its duties as outlined in subrule ~~901.13(2)~~ 901.13(5);
- d.* Not supervise more than ~~two~~ three removal technicians; and
- e.* Not have more than ~~four~~ six registered removal technicians employed by the same funeral establishment, or any funeral establishment owned, operated, or affiliated with that funeral establishment.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 8/5/26.