



National Funeral Directors Association  
\*Informs \*Educates \*Advocates

## 2011 POLICY

### FEDERAL CARGO SCREENING PROGRAM FOR HUMAN REMAINS

#### NFDA Position

That NFDA work with TSA and other relevant Federal Agencies, the Airlines and related organizations to develop an appropriate and acceptable Cargo Screening Program for Human Remains and explore potential alternative shipping options.

#### Background

Former President Bush approved legislation *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* on August 3, 2007. As a result, as of July 1, 2009, all Human Remains shipments must be tendered to the airlines from a known shipper. The **Known Shipper Program** is a systematic process for weighing risk and determining the legitimacy of shippers. TSA has established baseline requirements for participation in the Known Shipper Program. However, each airline, not TSA, makes the shippers known. In order to achieve known shipper status, a funeral home must contact a carrier or IAC to apply to become one of their known shippers. The **Known Shipper Management System** (KSMS) is an electronic system that is maintained by TSA for carriers and IACs to use to submit and vet information about their known shippers. Once the known shipper evaluation process is completed, the shipper is known in KSMS only to the carrier or IAC that has conducted the evaluation. Therefore, funeral homes must go through this process with every airline/IAC they ship with. The information that is requested by a carrier or IAC may vary between carriers as some may require information for their systems which is different from the TSA requirements.

Another provision of the 9/11 Commission Act is a requirement that 100% of all cargo, including human remains, shipped on a passenger aircraft be screened. If, during the screening process, an alarm is triggered, the package or container must then be opened and physically searched to resolve the alarm. This provision went into effect on August 1, 2010.

#### Discussion

The problem for NFDA as well as TSA and the airlines is the establishment of an appropriate alarm resolution protocol for human remains. At NFDA's urging, TSA and the airlines have stepped back from implementing a full screening program until we can evaluate all options for an appropriate and acceptable alarm resolution protocol for human remains. To this end, NFDA is actively engaged with TSA and a selected airline to develop and implement a pilot screening program for human remains along with an alarm resolution option to determine its effectiveness and feasibility while at the same time accommodating NFDA's concerns about privacy and respect for the remains. The pilot program started in December of last year and will probably last

for at least 3 to 4 months. After that, the results of the pilot program will be evaluated by all the stakeholders to see if it worked or needs to be changed or modified. Once all parties have agreed on an acceptable protocol, TSA will send it to every airline for review and comments. After reviewing and evaluating the comments, a revised protocol will be issued in the form of a federal regulation which all airlines must then comply with. Of course, the timeline for all of this has yet to be determined. Suffice it to say, it will take at least a year or more. In the meantime, human remains shipments will be screened according to current procedures.

**NFDA Governance History:**

2011: Committee Action 1/27/11; Policy Board Action 3/09/11

Attest: NFDA Policy Board (original resolution)      Date: March 9, 2011      File Code: RES096/Policybd