

Frigo, Victoria (COE)

From: Frigo, Victoria (COE)
Sent: Wednesday, May 08, 2013 10:22 AM
To: Cameron, Larry J. (ME)
Cc: Sumlar, Len D. (ME); Centorino, Joseph (COE)
Subject: Donation to a county department (INQ 13-114)

Mr. Cameron,

The County Ethics Code at Sec. 2-11.1 (e)(2)(e) allows the County to accept gifts “for use solely by the County in conducting its official business.”

You stated that Florida Cremation Services wishes to donate two body lifts to the County Medical Examiner Department. Len Sumlar, the Medical Examiner’s morgue bureau manager, inspected the equipment and reported that these two lifts would be put to good use in your department. Consequently, as long as Florida Cremation Services is making the donation without any expectation of any favorable action in return for the donation, this gift may be accepted.

Equally important, because your department interacts daily with funeral homes and cremation facilities, including Florida Cremation Services, you and your staff must be vigilant in not extending any special advantages or benefits to Florida Cremation Services in response to this donation. (*See ethics opinion RQO 05-119, which allowed the Village of Palmetto Bay to purchase a building at a price that was below market value as long as the Village Council did not extend any special privileges to the seller of the building were he to come before the Village Council in the future.*)

You may wish to document receipt of the gift with a letter to the donor explaining that the County Ethics Code allows acceptance of the donation as long as no *quid pro quo* arrangement is envisioned.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

VICTORIA FRIGO, SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY

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From: Cameron, Larry J. (ME)
Sent: Tuesday, May 07, 2013 3:53 PM
To: Ethics (COE)
Cc: Sumlar, Len D. (ME)
Subject: donation to a county department

I received a call from Brian at Florida Cremation Services (786 – 507 – 7288) regarding his desire to donate two body lifts to the Miami-Dade Medical Examiner Department (ME). A body lift is a piece of equipment that can raise or lower a cadaver. In our refrigerated storage at the ME we have some shelving, and at times our employees manually transfer

bodies from trays to shelves or vice versa. These lifts would simplify that process. Our morgue bureau manager, Ms. Len Sumlar, went to Florida Cremation Services to inspect the equipment and reported that these two lifts would be put to good use in our department. Since our department interacts daily with the funeral homes and cremation facilities, I wanted to ask the Ethics Commission for an opinion on this matter. Can the ME accept this donation? If the donation can be accepted, should the ME provide any paperwork to acknowledge the donation?

Thank you for considering this matter.

Respectfully,
Larry J. Cameron
ME Director of Operations