

PRESS RELEASE

Consolation is provided to families awaiting repatriation of mortal remains

08 July, 2011: Demand from the Middle East and Africa has prompted leading health and safety training provider, Action Training Academy International Training Division (ATA ITD), to include a medical embalming course to its already comprehensive suite of health and safety and emergency medicine training courses.

In modern day practice, medical embalming skills are being used in isolated and remote locations to ensure that excessive decomposition of mortal remains are avoided prior to and during repatriation and to prevent the spread of disease.

Numerous organisations operating on remote sites across Africa and the Middle East have found themselves in a predicament, whereby, after a fatal accident, mortal remains were arriving at their final destinations in an undignified state; and were thus deemed unfit for family closure. In an effort to avoid this, more and more organisations with operations in these remote sites are electing to send their medical staff on the medical embalming training, so that should such an unfortunate incident take place, the medical staff are at least fully-prepared and trained for embalming.

Funeral Academy for Africa (FAfA) - the first tertiary institution in South Africa to offer SETA-accredited training to people that hope to pursue a career in the funeral industry – has partnered with ATA ITD to provide the medical embalming course to expatriate medical staff from Africa and the Middle East.

It was as a direct result of ATA ITD, that FAfA received its first international embalming student in May of the last year. ATA ITD director **Trevor Justus** says: “This was the first time that ATA ITD organised and customised a course for embalming, and after sourcing the correct provider and arranging the entire accreditation process, ATA ITD has proven its ability to meet any and all customer requirements,” Justus explains.

Since May 2010, FAfA director **Bruce Riley**, points out that the Funeral Academy has accepted over 20 students for the medical embalming course. “FAfA has been inundated with requests for training students in embalming, and the organisation is currently in discussion with the Services SETA to establish the South African Institute of Embalmers, based upon the British equivalent – the BIE.

This will be a professional body in South Africa to which all qualified local embalmers will apply for membership. “All aspiring embalmers will need to write the qualifying examination in order to be registered as embalmers within South Africa, and FAfA is proud to be the initiator of this enormous undertaking,” explains Riley.

The day-to-day aspects of the embalming course comprise of morning lectures on fundamental sciences, as well as afternoon laboratory practice.

“During the first week, students are introduced to the mortuary laboratory, whereby they need to familiarise themselves with the equipment, layout and the different techniques of embalming. The second week involves practical sessions, with the final day set aside for written and practical examinations.”

Riley notes that it is an international legal requirement for a body to be fully-embalmed before it may leave the country where the death took place. "Accidents happen where loss of life is the result, and it is important that the deceased be returned to the country of origin intact, so that proper mourning and bereavement facilitation may take place," he continues, "It is therefore essential to return the body of the deceased fully-embalmed, and FAFa is dedicated to providing the highest-quality training in this field."

Meanwhile, Justus notes that ATA ITD will continue to commit itself to satisfying a wide variety of customer requirements. "We are dedicated to providing health and safety professionals with internationally-certified courses, no matter what field they require it in," concludes Justus.

Ends

Notes to the Editor

There are numerous photographs specific to this press release. Please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Action Training Academy link.

About ATA International Training Division

ATA's International Training Division (ITD) specialises in emergency medicine, occupational medicine, occupational hygiene, technical rescue, industrial fire-fighting, health and safety training courses for professionals operating in remote and isolated environments (e.g. oil and gas, mining, infrastructure and construction).

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