

DELTA COLLEGE
COUNSELING/ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES
MORTICIAN / FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Salary Range: \$28,410 - \$108,820 annually.

Personal Interests: Working with people in a way that provides a public service.

Work Environment: Generally attractive, clean and well kept. Some work is outdoors and some in a laboratory setting.

Description

Morticians are involved in serving the public in all aspects of funeral service and in preparing the human dead for the funeral and burial. Morticians may arrange for removal of the body to the funeral home, obtain information for the obituary and death certificate and arrange the time and place of the funeral service.

Morticians help the family of the deceased select a casket, music and burial clothes. They arrange flowers, lighting and music for the service, inform pallbearers of their duties and arrange for or provide the services of a member of the clergy.

In some cases, the mortician may also help survivors in applying for veteran's, social security and other death and survivor's benefits and arrange for transit and burial permits or for shipment to another location for burial.

Most morticians also are trained, licensed, and practicing embalmers. Embalming is a sanitary, cosmetic, and preservative process through which the body is prepared for the interment.

The mortician washes the body with germicidal soap and replaces the blood with embalming fluid to preserve the body. Embalmers may reshape and reconstruct disfigured or maimed bodies using materials such as clay, cotton, plaster of Paris, and wax. They also may apply cosmetics to provide a natural appearance, and then dress the body and place it in a casket.

Working Conditions

Morticians often work long and irregular hours, including evenings and weekends. Many work on an on-call basis, because they may be needed in the middle of the night. They work an average of 48 – 52 hours per week.

Morticians generally direct the operations of a funeral home. Much of their time is spent in attractive, clean and well-kept surroundings. Some outdoor work is necessary during all kinds of weather.

Embalming work is done in a laboratory-type rooms that by law must be clean, sanitary, and well-ventilated. They are exposed to odors of fluids, and to disinfectants and diseases that can cause illness or death. The chances of infection are slim if proper preventive measures are taken.

Morticians must have an appropriate wardrobe to show proper respect and consideration for the families and the dead. Suits, ties and dresses are customary for a conservative look.

Training, Other Qualifications

Funeral directors are licensed in all States. Licensing laws vary from State to State, but most require applicants to be 21 years old, have 2 years of formal education that includes studies in mortuary science, serve a 1-year apprenticeship, and pass a qualifying examination. College programs in mortuary science usually last from 2 to 4 years. Mortuary science programs

include courses in anatomy and physiology, pathology, embalming techniques, restorative art, business management, computer use and client services.

Delta College offers course equivalents to prepare for transfer to the Wayne State University Mortuary Science program. Specific coursework and a total of 60 semester credit hours must be completed before admission to the professional program. Interested students need to check with Counseling/Advising to insure a smooth transfer of credits.

Job Outlook

Employment opportunities for funeral directors are expected to be good, particularly for those who also embalm. However, mortuary science graduates may have to relocate to find jobs.

Nationally, employment of funeral directors is projected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through the year 2014. Approximately 1,000 morticians are expected to be employed in Michigan by 2014.

Employment of morticians in Michigan is expected to increase more slowly than the average for all occupations through the year 2014. In recent years, the number of new mortuary science licensees in Michigan has been less than the projected demand. For this reason, qualified graduates should find good employment opportunities.

Earnings

Earnings of morticians vary according to the size of the funeral home and the number of funerals handled. Nationally, the average annual salaries of

morticians/funeral directors was \$57,250. Michigan salaries are comparable to national salaries. Some morticians supplement their incomes by working at more than one funeral home. Average annual salaries for selected areas in Michigan in May 2006 were:

Area	Annual Average
Michigan	\$63,030
Detroit	\$89,950
Flint	\$60,850
Grand Rapids	\$53,790
Lansing	\$67,220
Warren/ Troy	\$49,980

Related Occupations

The job of mortician / funeral director requires tact, discretion, and compassion when dealing with grieving people. Others who need these qualities include the clergy, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and other health care professionals.

mortician.doc SC/10/07
 Sources: Occupational Outlook Handbook, Michigan Occupational Information System, and curriculum transfer sheet.
 Career Center, D 132
 Bay City/Saginaw: (989) 686-9072
 Midland/Auburn: (989) 495-4000, Ext. 9072
 Frankenmuth, Birch Run, Reese & Vassar: (989) 758-3400, Ext. 9072
<http://www.delta.edu/careercenter>

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