



For Immediate Release

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Drinkwine Mortuary's License to Sell Pre-Need Funeral Contracts Suspended Indefinitely - Account Mishandling Alleged

Littleton-based Drinkwine Mortuary has been summarily suspended from selling pre-need funeral contracts, following a Division of Insurance investigation that uncovered more than 40 accounts in which the money paid for pre-need funeral services was comingled with Drinkwine funds. State law provides that 75 percent of the money paid into pre-need funeral contracts must be deposited with a trustee, and Drinkwine's procedures violated that law.

"We anticipate there may be more accounts involved that come to light as people become aware of the situation," said Insurance Commissioner Marcy Morrison. "We are here to protect the consumer and that is why we must suspend Drinkwine's license to sell pre-need funeral contracts until all consumer accounts are made whole and this mess is cleaned up to our satisfaction. I have not yet determined exactly what form this will take, but we expect all consumer money to either be refunded to the consumer or restored into the proper trusts."

Drinkwine's license will be suspended until the matter is resolved in the Office of Administrative Courts.

The Division of Insurance has compiled a list of individual accounts that are believed to be compromised by Drinkwine's decision not to place the money in trust, as is required. Those individuals will be notified of the current situation.

"We suspect other individuals may have purchased pre-need funeral contracts through Drinkwine Mortuary and have questions," Morrison said. "Although additional information is limited at this time, we encourage account holders to contact the Division of Insurance consumer line at 303-894-7499. We will keep a list of affected individuals so we can keep them informed as we work with Drinkwine to settle this matter to our satisfaction."

Drinkwine's other services, including funerals at the Littleton location, are not affected by the license suspension.

There are just over 70 companies that are licensed in Colorado to sell pre-need funeral contracts. These companies are all regulated by DORA's Division of Insurance.

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DORA is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the marketplace and is committed to promoting a fair and competitive business environment in Colorado. Consumer protection is our mission.