# Member Rights & Responsibilities

Category: Membership & Service Delivery
Approved By: Executive Director / Board
Applies To: All CMS members, applicants, staff, volunteers, and service providers

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## Bylaw & Strategic Alignment Statement

This policy is aligned with the CMS Bylaws regarding membership structure, participation rights, and member obligations. It operationalizes CMS's values of dignity, accessibility, transparency, and cooperative member ownership.

Where differences arise, the CMS Bylaws take precedence.

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## 1. Purpose

To outline the rights and responsibilities of members of the Cooperative Memorial Society and ensure interactions between CMS, its members, and funeral service partners reflect CMS values of dignity, respect, accessibility, and cooperation.

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## 2. Policy Statement

CMS members are member-owners of the Co-op. Every member has the right to be treated with respect, receive accurate information, make informed choices about end-of-life planning, and participate meaningfully in the cooperative. Members also share responsibilities that support the effective delivery of CMS services and uphold CMS's reputation.

# 3. Member Rights

CMS members are entitled to the following rights:

## 3.1 Right to Dignity and Respect

Members have the right to be treated with compassion, courtesy, and dignity by CMS staff, volunteers, and contracted funeral service providers.

## 3.2 Right to Clear, Honest Information

Members have the right to receive plain-language information about:

- CMS membership
- Funeral planning options
- CMS-contracted funeral plans
- Applicable pricing

## 3.3 Right to Make Informed Choices

Members have full control over their funeral preferences and may update them at any time. CMS provides unbiased information to help members make informed decisions.

## 3.4 Right to Privacy and Security

Members have the right to have their personal information, membership data, and funeral preferences protected under CMS's Privacy Policy and the Member Privacy & Confidentiality Policy.

## 3.5 Right to Access Their Records

Members may review and update their contact information, preferences, and membership details upon request.

## 3.6 Right to Express Concerns Safely

Members may contact CMS with concerns, complaints, or questions at any time without fear of retaliation or negative consequences.

## 3.7 Right to Participate in the Cooperative

**Members may:**

- **Attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting**
- **Stand for election (where eligible)**
- **Serve on committees**
- **Participate in CMS events and volunteer roles**

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# 4. Member Responsibilities

Members share responsibility for helping CMS deliver effective, accurate, and respectful service. Responsibilities include:

## 4.1 Maintain Accurate Information

Members must notify CMS of changes to:

- Address
- Phone number
- Email
- Next-of-kin or representative information

## 4.2 Inform Family or Executors

Members should share their CMS membership and documented preferences with their family and personal representative to ensure timely access when needed.

## 4.3 Interact Respectfully

Members are expected to treat CMS staff, volunteers, and funeral service partners with courtesy and respect.

## 4.4 Understand CMS's Role

Members must understand that CMS:

- Is not a funeral service provider
- Coordinates contracted plans with locally owned funeral homes
  Provides advocacy, information, and planning support—not funeral direction or regulation

## 4.5 Support the Cooperative Model

Membership is a one-time fee and does not require renewal. Members may support CMS's sustainability through:

- Volunteering
- Participating in cooperative governance
- Making donations (optional but encouraged)

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## 5. Complaints & Concerns

Members have the right to raise concerns or complaints through:

- The Executive Director
- The Membership Services Coordinator
- The CMS Complaints & Service Resolution process

CMS will respond respectfully and promptly in accordance with its policies and service commitments.

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## 6. Responsibilities of CMS

CMS commits to:

- Providing accurate, timely, and accessible information
- Treating all members with dignity
- Protecting member privacy
- Delivering consistent member support
- Maintaining fair and transparent partnership agreements
- Including member voices in the cooperative's direction

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## 7. Continuous Improvement

CMS will review member rights and responsibilities regularly to reflect:

- Bylaw changes
- Contract updates
- Evolving community needs
- Accessibility improvements
- Feedback from members, volunteers, and service partners