

חברה קדישא
CHEVRA KADISHA
OF SONOMA COUNTY

“To Honor the Dead and Strengthen the Living”

Guidelines for Shomrim

Sitting with the body of the deceased as a guardian or *shomer* is an important *mitzvah*. Your presence expresses respect or *kevod ha-met* for the body and soul of the deceased. The body or *met* was the vessel that housed the person’s soul during their lifetime. Your responsibility is to protect the sanctity of the *met* and offer consolation to the soul. Therefore, he or she should not be left unattended.

There are a few things that must be remembered to ensure the utmost dignity and respect to the deceased:

It is imperative that the *met* not be disturbed. Our tradition does not place the deceased on view. They are to be in a casket that, once closed by members of the *Chevra Kadisha*, is never opened again, not even by the funeral home staff or family members.

Please refrain from unnecessary conversation while in the room where *shmira* is being observed. Do not eat, drink, chew gum or sleep during the time you are a *shomer*. Please read silently and with soothing intention from The Book of Psalms and The Book of Job.

By guarding the *met* and thereby the soul, you are performing one of the greatest kindnesses of all: a *mitzvah* that can never be repaid, *Chesed Shel Emes*.