



CODE OF BURIAL PRACTICE

1. CONDUCT

The burial of a human body is a significant and often deeply emotional occasion for those taking part in the service. This must never be forgotten by burial authority staff, who must work together to create and maintain a dignified, respectful, inclusive and professional atmosphere throughout all proceedings.

2. STAFF

Great care must be taken in appointing members of burial staff who act with compassion, professionalism and respect, and who uphold the standards expected within a modern bereavement service. All staff employed in the operation of equipment must be appropriately trained, competent and compliant with all current technical, ethical, health and safety, environmental and legal requirements. Ongoing professional development should be encouraged for all employees.

3. PRIOR TO COMMITTAL

A coffin or container and its contents brought to the cemetery, whether for a service prior to burial or an unattended burial, the reception arrangements must preserve dignity, privacy and respect of the deceased.

4. CORRECT IDENTITY

No coffin or container shall be accepted unless it bears adequate particulars confirming the identity of the deceased person contained therein. If encased, both the outer cover and inner coffin must bear appropriate identification.

Every care should be taken to ensure correct identification throughout; from the moment the coffin is received at the cemetery until the final interment within the grave.

5. AFTER COMMITTAL

Having ensured that the correct authority to inter has been received, the coffin and its contents shall be placed into the grave exactly as received at the cemetery. The deceased shall not be moved within or removed from the grave following the act of committal except for a lawful purpose and when the correct legal requirements are in place to permit such an act.

Once a coffin containing the deceased has been placed within the grave, it will not be disturbed. The grave will be backfilled with soil, or in the case of a bricked grave, mausoleum or vault, shall be sealed immediately following the completion of the service. This is done either by the cemetery staff or the family and mourners if such instructions have been received from the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial and a suitable risk assessment has been carried out.

Following the completion of backfilling or sealing, the grave should be left in a neat and tidy condition with wreaths and flowers carefully placed on it by the cemetery staff.

6. MECHANICAL APPARATUS

Only "authorised" employees of the Burial Authority who have received appropriate training shall operate plant or vehicles. "Authorised" is deemed to mean an employee that is receiving instruction and is supervised by a qualified operator, or an employee that holds a suitable driving assessment permit relating to the vehicle or item of plant.

All mechanical apparatus used in the cemetery shall be regularly overhauled, cleaned and kept in good repair to ensure perfect working order.

7. SEPARATELY BURIED

Each deceased person given to the care of the Burial Authority shall be buried separately. Exceptions may be made, for example in the case of parent and child, or siblings, where the applicant has made a specific request and where permitted by law and local policy.

8. COFFIN COVERS

Where a reusable cover or other approved reusable product is used, informed authority must be obtained from the applicant for burial authorising its use and consenting to its subsequent removal prior to interment.

9. STATUTORY REGULATIONS

No burial shall take place without the consent of the person responsible for the cemetery. All burials shall be carried out according to the regulations applicable to the individual Burial Authority.

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Burial services shall be delivered fairly and without discrimination. Burial Authorities should respect the diverse cultural, religious, spiritual and personal needs of bereaved people wherever reasonably practicable, while maintaining legal and operational requirements.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Burial Authorities should operate with regard to environmental sustainability, including emissions reduction, energy efficiency, waste minimisation and responsible use of resources, while maintaining the highest standards of care and dignity.