

It is unlawful to remove any body or remains of a body buried in any place of burial without a **Disinterment Licence** from the Ministry of Health.

This pamphlet outlines the process you follow to obtain a **Disinterment Licence**.

A Health Protection Officer at the NDHB can assist when completing the **Disinterment Licence** application.

6 Checklist

- Contact a Health Protection Officer to discuss the application requirements and to obtain the forms.
- Complete the Disinterment Licence Application Form and ensure all next of kin provide written consent.
- Complete the Sworn Statement Form and have it witnessed and signed by a Justice of the Peace or other authorised official.
- Obtain the signed landowners/trustees consent of the urupa/property/burial ground.
- Submit the forms along with the original Death Certificate (or certified copy) to the Health Protection Officer.
- Include the fee in the application (make cheques payable to the Ministry of Health).
- Notify the Register for Births, Deaths and Marriages at the Department of Internal Affairs within 5 days after the disinterment of full details of the fate of the deceased (where the deceased was relocated to or cremated)

Disinterment Information and Guidelines

Contact us

A Health Protection Officer can assist you by offering help and advice about the steps to follow before obtaining a **Disinterment Licence**.

Contact a Health Protection Officer at:

Physical address: Northland DHB, Dairy House,
Porowini Avenue, Whangarei

Postal address: Northland DHB, P/Bag 9742,
Whangarei, 0148

Phone: (09) 430 4100

Fax: (09) 470 0570

Website: www.northlanddhb.org.nz



1 Application for a Disinterment Licence

Applications are usually made by:

- a person related to the deceased
- the Executor of the Will of the deceased
- a Funeral Director acting on behalf of either the above
- an Iwi/Maori Authority acting on behalf of the close relatives or
- a person acting for the family.

The application forms for a Disinterment Licence are available at the Northland District Health Board (NDHB) Public Health Unit or online at www.northlanddhb.org.nz

Note: A Disinterment Licence is not required to unearth ashes unless it involves exposing a casket containing human remains.

2 Application Requirements

a) Relatives of the Deceased

The wishes of all next of kin (e.g. spouse, parent/s, sibling/s, children, guardian/s) must be known before the Disinterment Licence can be issued.

Their written consent must be gained before a Disinterment Licence is granted. The family members must indicate their consent and relationship to the deceased.

b) Reason for the Disinterment

State the reason for the disinterment on the application form. Each reason will be assessed on its own merits.

Examples of reasons may include:

- cultural
- burial in the wrong plot
- relatives who have moved to another area
- or the mental anguish of a relative because of some other circumstances.

c) Cause of Death

The original death certificate or a certified copy signed by a Justice of the Peace or a Health Protection Officer is required with every application.

d) Sworn Statement

A sworn statement that the information in the application is true and correct must be submitted (sworn statement forms are available at the NDHB or online at www.northlanddhb.org.nz).

e) Landowners Consent

Written consent to enter the urupa/property/burial ground must be given by the trustees / owners / authorities of the burial ground.

f) Advise where the remains will be reinterred.

g) Disinterment Licence Fee

A fee is payable to the Ministry of Health for each application. Usually one Disinterment Licence is required for each body that is to be disinterred. Exceptions would include a common grave.

The fee may be waived where special reasons make it appropriate.

3 Approval Process

Applications along with the fee and supporting documents should be submitted to a Health Protection Officer at the NDHB.

The Health Protection Officer will assess and review the application, then forward it to the Ministry of Health.

It is not usual for a Disinterment Licence to be granted between one month and one year after burial. If the body has been embalmed, this limitation may not apply.

The cost of the appropriate vessel for the remains and the removal of the remains is the responsibility of the applicant.

4 Issuing of the Disinterment Licence

Normally, the Disinterment Licence is issued within three working days after receipt by the Ministry of Health.

The Disinterment Licence is issued to the applicant and copied to the Health Protection Officer at the NDHB.

The Disinterment Licence may be issued with/without conditions.

5 Supervision of Disinterment

The Health Protection Officer will supervise the disinterment to ensure it is carried out in a sanitary manner and with due respect to the deceased.

The applicant must ensure the correct human remains is disinterred and that it is legally and properly conducted with decency and respect to the deceased and adjacent burial sites.

The applicant must consider Health and Safety issues associated with an excavation.

Notify the Register for Births Deaths and marriages - see checklist

