Cremation of More Than One Body Simultaneously

Summary  This guideline provides procedures to follow in receipt of an application for an exemption under clause 75 of the Public Health Regulation to cremate more than one body simultaneously.

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Audience  Public Health Unit Director; authorised officers of Public Health Units
CREMATION OF MORE THAN ONE BODY SIMULTANEOUSLY

PURPOSE
This document is a guide to Public Health Unit authorised officers in receipt of an application for exemption under Clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012 to cremate more than one body simultaneously.

KEY PRINCIPLES
Generally the cremation retort (furnace) is not large enough to accommodate two adult size coffins at the same time, and requests to cremate two adult size coffins at the same time are uncommon.

However, this Guideline allows for an exemption to be given under special circumstances where a family requests that more than one body be cremated together. Examples of the special circumstances could be where two sibling children died under the same circumstances or a mother and baby whom died during childbirth.

Under these circumstances the person who applies to cremate two bodies simultaneously in the same cremator retort must have the approval from the Director General or delegate.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE
This Guideline provides protocols to Public Health Units for approving the simultaneous cremation of more than one body at a time.

The approval process to be followed includes:

- An Application for Cremation of More than One Body Simultaneously (Appendix 1) by the same person who made and signed the application for cremation
- Requires the applicant to provide information on their relationship to the deceased; the relationship between the deceased persons and the reasons for the bodies to be cremated together.

The guideline also contains a draft internal approval instrument to be completed by the Public Health Unit (Appendix 2) and a draft letter of approval to the applicant (Appendix 3).

Public Health Units should retain a copy of the approval on an internal file.

REVISION HISTORY

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<th>Version</th>
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ATTACHMENTS

1. Cremation of more than one body simultaneously: Guideline
Cremation of more than one body simultaneously

NSW Government Health

Issue date: December-2013
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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This document is intended as a guide to authorised officers at Public Health Units in receipt of an application seeking permission to cremate more than one body simultaneously.

1.2 Legislative Explanations

Clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012 prohibits cremating more than one body in the same crematory retort simultaneously, except with the approval of the Director-General. Under clause 63 of the Public Health Regulation 2012 each body must be placed in a coffin for cremation.

2 ASHES

The public need to be assured that only one person may be cremated at a time to ensure that the ashes that they receive are not a mixture of ashes from different people. It is for this reason that cremation authorities no longer attempt to separate wood ash from human ash.

3. CREMATION RETORT

Generally the cremation retort chamber is not large enough to accommodate two adult size coffins at the same time, and so requests to cremate two adult bodies simultaneously is unlikely to occur, and could not generally be fulfilled. If there is any doubt when using an oversized coffin and the capacity of the retort chamber, the cremation authority should be consulted beforehand by the funeral director.

4. CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO A REQUEST

There may be exceptional circumstances where a family requests that bodies be cremated together, such as where two sibling children died under the same circumstances or of a mother and baby who died during childbirth.

5. DELEGATION

A person who wishes to cremate more than one body in the same crematory retort has to seek approval from the Director General, or delegate. The Director General’s authority under clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012 has been delegated (delegation PH310 page 8.65) including to a Local Health District’s Public Health Unit Director located in a Public Health Unit.
3 APPROVAL PROCEDURE

The procedure is as follows:

- An application to the Public Health Unit is made using the attached template at Appendix 1 by the same person who made and signed the application for cremation. This person must be the executor of the estate of the deceased, the nearest surviving relative of the deceased or another proper person as required under Clauses 79 (3) or 80 (3) of the Regulation. Copies of the application to cremate, the cremation permit and the cremation certificate under Clauses 82, 83 or 84 must be attached to the application to cremate more than one body simultaneously.

- The appropriate Public Health Unit staff member, usually an authorised officer, completes Appendix 2 which is a template to obtain approval of the Director-General vide delegation to the Public Health Unit Director.

- Appendix 3, a template reply to the applicant, is completed with Appendix 2 ready for the signature of the Public Health Unit Director once approval has been granted.

- The Medical referee’s cremation permit or Coroner’s cremation permit must be obtained for each of deceased people under clause 82, 83 or 84 of the Public Health Regulation 2012, as the approval to cremate simultaneously does not obviate the need for this documentation.

The approval procedure may be carried out by fax or PDF exchange electronically.
Appendix 1 – Application Form

APPLICATION FOR CREMATION OF MORE THAN ONE BODY SIMULTANEOUSLY

Clause 75 (1) Public Health Regulation 2012

Full name of applicant: ........................................................................................................
Address of applicant: ........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
Contact number: (H) ........................................ (W) ........................................ (M) ..................
Fax number: ...........................................
Relationship of applicant to the deceased: .................................................................
Full name of deceased 1: ............................................................................................... 
Date of Birth: ....................................................................................................................
Full name of deceased 2: ............................................................................................... 
Date of Birth: ....................................................................................................................
Relationship between deceased people and reason for cremation together: ...............
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
Did you complete the application for cremation for 1?........................... ☐ Yes ☐ No
Did you complete the application for cremation for 2?........................... ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has a cremation permit been issued by Medical Referee or Coroner for both deceased under clauses 82, 83 or 84 of the Public Health Regulation 2012:

Signature: ..........................................
Date.............................................
Appendix 2 – Briefing Note

Public Health Unit

File Number: XXXXX

PURPOSE: To approve the cremation of more than one body simultaneously under clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012

RECOMMENDATION: Approval is granted by the Director-General pursuant to clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012 to [NAME OF APPLICANT] to permit a cremation of bodies of deceased [NAME OF DECEASED 1] and [NAME OF DECEASED 2] together in the one retort simultaneously.

KEY ISSUES: [TO BE COMPLETED BY PHU]

BACKGROUND: [TO BE COMPLETED BY PHU]

CONSULTATION: [TO BE COMPLETED BY PHU WHERE APPROPRIATE]

Signature: [SIGN]

Author: Telephone: Date:

Authorised officer

1 Public Health Unit Director/Public Health Officer [SIGN]:

Approved vide delegation from the Director General (PH310 page 8.65) Public Health Delegations Manual under clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012.

2 Author
Appendix 3 – Letter to Applicant

[APPLICANT’S NAME]
[ADDRESS]

Dear [APPLICANT’S NAME]

Reference is made to your application of [DATE] in regard to the approval for permission to cremate more than one body in the same crematory retort simultaneously.

Approval has been granted pursuant to clause 75 (1) of the Public Health Regulation 2012 by [PERSON MAKING THE DECISION] by their delegated authority from the Director General to [NAME OF APPLICANT] for the cremation of the bodies of [NAME OF DECEASED 1] and [NAME OF DECEASED 2] together in the same crematory retort simultaneously.

The approval is subject to compliance with the clauses 82, 83 or 84 of the Public Health Regulation 2012 that a medical referee’s or Coroner’s cremation permit has been obtained for each of the deceased people. This documentation has been sighted and a copy made for records purposes.

Should you have any enquiries please contact [EHO] on [TELEPHONE] or email.[email address]

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]
Public Health Unit Director

(DATE)