

What to do if there is no medical referee in your area

NSW Medical Referee Factsheet

What is a medical referee?

A medical referee is a registered medical practitioner who has been appointed by the Secretary of the NSW Ministry of Health (or delegate) to provide independent medical advice as to whether there is a need to further examine the remains of a deceased person prior to cremation.

Under Schedule 7 of the *Public Health Regulation 2022* a medical referee also includes medically qualified public health officers (appointed under the *Public Health Act*), and medical superintendents (or equivalent) of public hospitals.

What happens if there is no medical referee in your area?

In the event there is no available medical referee, or all medical referees in your area are on leave, you should attempt to contact a medical referee in your nearest suburb/town.

If you are unsure of who is appointed for your surrounding areas, you should review the [NSW Medical Referee Register](#), located on the SESLHD Public Health Unit Medical Referees Website, by selecting 'How can I search for Medical Referee?'.

Should you be unable to locate a suitable medical referee, you may then contact the medical superintendent of a public hospital who has the authority to sign the NSW Health Medical Referee's Cremation Permit. The request to have a medical superintendent issue a cremation permit is only to be used in exceptional situations.

Should you still be unable to locate a suitable medical referee or a medical superintendent to sign the cremation permit, please contact the SESLHD Public Health Unit on (02) 9382 8333 option 5 or via SESLHD-PHU-MedicalRefereeTeam@health.nsw.gov.au to seek further advice/clarification.

Helpful Links

- [NSW Health Guidelines: Disposal of the Deceased](#)
- [Public Health Regulation 2022](#)
- [Application to Appoint NSW Health Medical Referee](#)
- [Cremation Permit \(other than still-born children\)](#)
- [Cremation Permit for Body of Still-Born Child](#)

For more information

SESLHD-PHU-MedicalRefereeTeam@health.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 9382 8333 option 5 (business hours only)