

CENTRAL KAROO

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



SECTION:

MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES

MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS



The Section aims to create an environment supportive of good health and minimize those factors detrimental to our health in the Central Karoo district

The Section is focused on the needs and expectations of our communities in the Central Karoo. We seek a good relationship between the municipality and its inhabitants, with a collective responsibility for the environment to ensure that all communities will live in an environment that is beneficial to their health

OUR FUNCTION

The National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003) defines Municipal Health Services as Environmental Health. In terms of Section 1 of the Act Municipal Health Services are defined as:

- Water Quality Monitoring;
- Waste Management and Monitoring;
- Food Control;
- Environmental Pollution Control;
- Health Surveillance of Premises;
- Communicable Diseases Control;
- Vector Control;
- Chemical Safety; and
- **Management of Human Remains**

The Air Quality Management & Integrated Waste Management functions are also performed by the Section Municipal Health.

EHP's act as public arbiters of EH standards, maintaining close contact with the communities they serve. We act as advisers, educators, consultants, managers and enforcement officers (enforcing health policies), ensuring people are able to live, work & play in safe, healthy environments

STAFF & AREA OF SERVICE DELIVERY

EHP's are employed at our Head Office in Beaufort West as well as our Prince Albert & Laingsburg Offices

Services are rendered in ten (10) communities in the Central Karoo Region, namely Murraysburg, Beaufort West, Nelspoort, Merweville, Prince Albert, Leeu-Gamka, Klaarstroom, Prince Albert Road, Laingsburg & Matjiesfontein, as well as in the rural areas of the Beaufort West, Prince Albert & Laingsburg Districts.

DID YOU KNOW...

Mortuaries, funeral undertaker's premises and crematorium premises must comply with the requirements of the Regulations relating to the Management of Human Remains, R363 of 22 May 2013 published in terms of the National Health Act.

ISSUE OF A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE

No person shall prepare or store any Human 'remains except on approved funeral undertaker's premises or mortuary in respect of which a certificate of competence has been issued.

A local government may, if it is satisfied that health nuisance exists on any funeral undertaker's premises or mortuary, situated in its area of jurisdiction, issue a written order to the owner or person in charge of the premises in question to stop all activities connected with the handling, preparation and storage of Human remains on the premises, until such time that the health nuisance referred to, in the order has been eliminated.

VALIDITY AND TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE

A certificate of competence excluding a provisional certificate of competence shall on endorsement by the issuing local government, be transferable from one holder to another, and such certificate shall be **renewed every second year.**

DUTIES OF HOLDER

The certificate holder shall immediately inform the issuing government in writing, if there are any changes in the particulars supplied to the issuing government in the application for the certificate of competence concerned.

Failure by the holder or a person in charge/authorized person to comply with this regulation shall constitute an offence.

DISPOSAL OF CORPSES

No person may inter a corpse in such a manner that it constitutes a health nuisance, and for this purpose the following apply:

The lid of the coffin, or where one coffin has been buried on top of another coffin, the lid of the top coffin, may not be less than 1500mm in depth.

DISTURBANCE OF MORTAL REMAINS

Subject to the provisions of an exhumation order given in terms of section 3(4) of the Inquests Act, 1959 (Act 58 of 1959), Section 3 of Ordinance No 12 of 1980 and any other provision of any Act relating to the exhumation of corpses, no person may, without the environmental health practitioner being present:

- disturb a corpse or mortal remains or the ground surrounding it in a cemetery;
- open a grave;
- remove a corpse from a grave; or
- exhume or cause a corpse to be exhumed during such time as the cemetery is open to the public.

No person may re-open a grave for the purpose of interring a second corpse in the same grave unless –

- the grave was initially made deeper for this purpose, and if not made deeper, then only 30 days after a period of 5 years since the interment of the first corpse;
- for purposes of burial of a receptacle containing ashes, the depth does not exceed 300 mm; and
- the consent of the local municipality has been obtained.

POLLUTION

The pollution of groundwater by buried corpses is rare although burial sites do produce dioxin and furan emissions which are potentially highly hazardous to humans.

Possible health effects caused by exposure to dioxins include skin diseases and cancer. There are also some concerns about embalming fluids, such as formaldehyde, entering the groundwater.

The risks of this are slight, however, since 4% formaldehyde solution is usually used and most of this degrades in the body and soil before reaching the water table.

REPORTING HEALTH NUISANCES

The owner, occupier or user of land or premises must –

- Ensure that a Health nuisance does not exist or occur on his or her land or premises;
- Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the existence of a health nuisance on the land or premises, eliminate the health nuisance, or if he or she is unable to eliminate the health nuisance;
- Take steps to the satisfaction of the municipality to reduce the risk to municipal health; and
- Report the existence of the health nuisance to the municipality.



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