

New Plymouth District Council

Cemeteries and Crematoria Handbook 2020



Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ngāmotu
**New Plymouth
District Council**

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Meeting	Date	Decision	Next Review
Council	21 April 2020	Adopt Handbook	
	21 February 2022	Include Matariki to public holiday definition	

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Definitions	4
3. General information.....	5
3.1 Cemeteries and crematoria.....	5
3.2 Cemetery office	6
3.3 Notification period	6
3.4 Fees and forms.....	6
3.5 Days and hours for burials and cremations.....	6
4. Purchase or allocation of burial plots	7
4.1 Application	7
4.2 Exclusive Right of Burial	7
4.3 Allocation of plots	8
5. Behaviour in cemeteries	8
5.1 Appropriate behaviour.....	8
5.2 Animals.....	8
5.3 Vehicles	8
5.4 Commercial photography or filming	9
5.5 Trading.....	9
6. Interments and Disinterment.....	9
6.1 Interments	9
6.2 Burial plot depth.....	9
6.3 Subsequent interments	9
6.4 Ash interments	9
6.5 Stillborn babies.....	10
6.6 Returned service areas.....	10
6.7 Disinterment	10
7. Physical Works and Memorials	10
7.1 Procedure for installing memorials.....	10
8. Permitted physical works	11
9. Decorating plots	12
9.1 Decorations and tributes	12
9.2 Temporary markers	12
9.3 Removal of decorations.....	12
9.4 Donated plants.....	13

10. Maintenance of plots, graves and memorials	13
10.1 Maintenance	13
10.2 Removal of memorials.....	13
11. Natural Burial	14
11.1 Designated natural burial areas.....	14
11.2 Natural burial applications	14
11.3 Plot allocation.....	14
11.4 Natural burial interment	14
11.5 Decorations and memorials	15
11.6 Planting	15
11.7 Maintenance of designated natural burial areas.....	15
12. Crematorium.....	15
12.1 Application	15
12.2 The cremation.....	16
12.3 Casket for cremation.....	16
12.4 Medical enquiries required.....	16
12.5 Items prohibited for cremation.....	17
12.6 Remembrance garden	17
13. Further information	18

1. Introduction

In compiling this Cemeteries and Crematoria Handbook, New Plymouth District Council staff have been very conscious that we are dealing with a deeply important and sensitive matter for our community. How we care for our deceased loved ones is one of the most intimate and personal experiences for each of us.

As a community, our cemeteries are an expression of the respect we show to those who have gone before. They are to be places of contemplation, of respect for our history and the stories of our people. They are places to come to grieve, to remember and to give thanks.

Cemetery services are delivered by the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team. All requests for cemetery information or services should be referred to the Cemetery and Crematorium Officer in the first instance.

This handbook contains information relating to the key operational areas of cemeteries and crematoria controlled by the Council, and provides rules to facilitate the orderly, safe and efficient management of these cemeteries and crematoria. It reflects our desire to provide an environment and services that support the needs of the community; and is intended as a ready reference for funeral directors, the public and other customers.

This handbook has been made in accordance with clause 6 of the New Plymouth District Council Cemeteries and Crematoria Bylaw 2020 ('the bylaw'). This handbook should be read in conjunction with the bylaw, regulations, and legislation relevant to the management of cemeteries and crematoria, including:

- The Burial and Cremation Act 1964;
- The Burial and Cremation (Removal of Monuments and Tablets) Regulations 1967;
- Cremation Regulations 1973;
- New Zealand Standard: Headstones and Cemetery Monuments (NZS 4242:2018);
- The Local Government Act 2002;
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015;
- Radiation Protection Act 1965;
- Veteran's Affairs New Zealand memorials handbook;
- Taranaki Regional Council Resource Consents relating to New Plymouth District Council owned cemeteries and crematoria; and
- New Plymouth District Council Dog Control Bylaw.

This handbook does not apply to urupa or any other cemetery, crematorium or burial ground that are not controlled by the Council.

2. Definitions

In this handbook, **Council** means the New Plymouth District Council, and **Cemetery** and **Crematorium** means any cemetery or crematorium controlled by the Council.

The key terms defined below are marked in **bold** throughout the handbook.

Approved Person	means a person who is approved by the Council to carry out works or undertake activities in any cemetery or crematorium and shall include any Funeral Director .
Ashes	mean the cremated remains of a deceased person.
Assignee	means the person or persons to whom an Exclusive Right of Burial is transferred to on the death of the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial .
Bylaw	means the New Plymouth District Council Cemeteries and Crematoria Bylaw 2020.
Cremation area	means a part of any cemetery surveyed by the Council consisting of memorials of a specified size to commemorate any person whose ashes are buried.
Decorate or Decoration	means place or attach any flowers, vase, figurine, ornament or adornment.
Designated natural burial area	means an area in a cemetery designated by the Council to be a natural burial area.
Exclusive Right of Burial	means the right of burial in a surveyed plot within a Council cemetery record, sold by the Council under section 10 of the Act.
Funeral Director	means a person, who in the course of their business, carries out burials and related matters.
Limited lawn	means a part of any cemetery lawn where memorials are restricted to the specifications to be placed on the memorial strip area provided.
Memorial	means any tombstone, headstone, memorial , monument, tablet, plaque kerbing or other memorial or erection.
Memorial strip	means the concreted ground area surveyed by the Council in numbered order for placement of memorials .
Natural burial or eco burials	means the burial of a body with the following characteristics: a) a shallow grave is used; and b) the body is not embalmed and is contained in a biodegradable casket; and c) the grave is over planted; and d) no memorial is erected at the grave site.
Open memorial area	means a part of any cemetery where memorials of dimensions and materials approved by the Council are permitted.
Physical works	means the installation, modification, maintenance, repair, or removal of any plot or memorial .
Plot	means a lot in a cemetery that is surveyed for the purposes of interment and shown on the official cemetery plan deposited in the cemetery office.

Public holiday	means Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, the day after New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Matariki, Labour Day, the birthday of the reigning Sovereign, Waitangi Day and Taranaki Anniversary Day.
Purchaser	means a purchaser of the Exclusive Right of Burial in a plot , and owner of such exclusive right , and may include their executors, administrators and assignees .
Returned Services Cemetery	means all portions of a cemetery set aside for service personnel and their partners and in which no kerbing, fences or memorials other than headstones provided by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand may be constructed.
Working day	has the same meaning as section 29 of the Interpretation Act 1999, and generally means Monday to Friday excluding public holidays .

3. General information

3.1 Cemeteries and crematoria

The Council controls the Taranaki Crematorium and 11 cemeteries throughout the district, being:

Mangapouri Cemetery | Plantation Road, New Plymouth

Mangapouri is New Plymouth's new cemetery. The cemetery is to be developed in stages.

Te Henui Cemetery | Junction of Watson and Lemon streets, New Plymouth

Te Henui opened in 1861 and is the original New Plymouth public cemetery. Set in an attractive park environment, it serves as a heritage cemetery rich in local history and monuments.

Awanui Cemetery | Awanui Street, New Plymouth

Awanui is a lawn cemetery and is the main public cemetery for New Plymouth. It is located in the city within a rural setting.

Waitara Cemetery | Bayly Street, Waitara

Opened in 1885, Waitara Cemetery offers an historic monumental area complemented by a more modern lawn cemetery.

Inglewood Cemetery | Rata Street, Inglewood

Inglewood Cemetery has served the local community since 1879 and has an historic monumental area linking to local heritage.

Locating graves

The Council holds all historical records for Council-controlled cemeteries. Information is available on request but depending on the volume of information a fee may be required.

The cemeteries database can be viewed online at:

<http://www.newplymouthnz.com/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium/Cemetery-Search>

Oakura Cemetery | Butlers Lane, Oakura

Oakura Cemetery is tucked away behind Butlers Tavern on the main highway and has served this settlement since the first recorded burial in 1888.

Okato Cemetery | SH45, Okato

Okato Cemetery is on the left if you are heading into Okato from New Plymouth. It is clearly sign-posted from SH45.

Urenui Cemetery | Junction of Totara and Ngapapa streets

Urenui Cemetery is situated a few kilometres north of Waitara and has served as a final resting place for many early families since 1882. This cemetery remains a strong focal point for the local community's heritage.

Rural cemeteries

There are three Council-administered cemeteries that provide a range of burial options for the rural communities they serve. They are Purangi, Waireka and Tarata.

Taranaki Crematorium | 629 Junction Road, SH3, New Plymouth

The crematorium offers cremation services, a chapel capacity of up to 200 people and the Gardens of Remembrance for the interment of **ashes (memorial)** placement is not possible in the garden area). The crematorium also has a Book of Remembrance that provides a long-lasting **memorial**. All names are automatically entered, and the book is available for viewing by arrangement.

3.2

Cemetery office

Our cemetery office organises bookings and provides information about cemeteries and requirements.

Open: 8am-5pm Monday to Friday.

Phone: 06-759 6060

3.3

Notification period

An application for an intended burial or cremation must be given to the Council at least one clear **working day** prior to the time set for the funeral, the cremation, or the burial.

3.4

Fees and forms

All forms can be found on the New Plymouth District Council website:

<http://www.newplymouthnz.com/en/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium/Burial-Procedures>

Cemetery fees are set by the Council each year and are available on the website or by contacting the Council's Customer Service Centre. Fees relate to **plot** purchase, cremation, burial and **memorial** work. Burial **plot** fees and cremation fees must be paid prior to any burial or cremation taking place.

Please refer to the Cemetery and Crematorium Fees on Council's website for specific information on the costs involved:

<http://www.newplymouthnz.com/en/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium-Fees-and-Charges>

3.5

Days and hours for burials and cremations

Cemeteries controlled by the New Plymouth District Council are open to the public for visitors seven days a week.

Burial services take place between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. Cremation services take place between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday,

and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. No burials or cremations will be scheduled on **public holidays**.

Burials and cremations outside of the days and hours above may be approved on specific request. An additional fee may be charged to cover extra costs associated with the request.

Please refer to the Cemetery and Crematorium Fees on Council's website for specific information on the costs involved.

4. Purchase or allocation of burial plots

4.1 Application

Our cemetery office organises purchase and allocation of burial plots, bookings, and provides information about cemeteries.

Where a person other than a **Funeral Director** or **approved person** is organising a burial, that person will need to contact the cemetery office, complete the required forms and pay all fees prior to the burial taking place, which will include a staff presence cost recovery fee.

A completed Burial Application form for a burial warrant must be received by the Council no fewer than one clear **working day** (at least eight working hours) prior to the time of the interment.

The **Funeral Director**, or person organising the interment must submit the Application form.

When a death occurs on the last day of the working week, the weekend or on a statutory holiday, the burial will need to be held over. The earliest a burial could occur, depending on circumstances, is 2.00pm on the first **working day** of the following week.

Where the services of a **Funeral Director** have not been engaged to coordinate the funeral service and control the activities at the grave site, an **approved person** will be supplied by the Council. The use of an **approved person** requires adherence to conditions of use that pertains to each site and may involve additional costs.

4.2 Exclusive Right of Burial

An ash or burial **plot** can be secured by way of purchase from the Council of an **Exclusive Right of Burial**. **Exclusive Rights of Burial** are sold subject to terms and conditions decided by the Council. Your **Funeral Director** will organise the purchase the **Exclusive Right of Burial**, or you can contact the cemetery office or look on Council's website for the **Exclusive Right of Burial** application form and for more information.

An **Exclusive Right of Burial** will lapse and revert to the Council if a burial does not take place within 60 years of the purchase date.

An owner of a **plot** may, with the consent of the Council, transfer ownership rights to another person. This will incur a fee.

Please refer to the Cemetery and Crematorium Fees on Council's website for specific information on the costs associated with an **Exclusive Right of Burial**.

4.3 **Allocation of plots**

The Council allocates **plots**. Where there is a request to obtain a **plot** in a particular area, that request will be accommodated if possible, providing there is no conflict with the control and management of the relevant cemetery under the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 and/or Council's consent requirements.

When allocating **plots**, it is Council's policy that no sales of **Exclusive Rights of Burial** will be permitted for **plots** in Council-controlled cemeteries unless there has been a recent bereavement and interment in those cemeteries of a spouse, partner or other close family member, and it is possible to offer an **Exclusive Right of Burial** without significantly compromising the available burial space.

5. Behaviour in cemeteries

5.1 **Appropriate behaviour**

Our community comes together within our cemeteries for contemplation and reflection, and to memorialise their loved ones. Everyone visiting our cemeteries must maintain appropriate and respectful behaviour.

No person may behave in a manner, or bring an item into a cemetery or crematorium, that does any of the following:

- Is a nuisance or is offensive to another person;
- Damages or interferes with any property, memorial or decoration owned by the Council; or
- Damages the property of another person.

No one may disturb or interrupt a funeral, burial or cremation.

5.2 **Animals**

No animals other than dogs are allowed into a cemetery or crematorium unless they have received written permission from the Council.

(Note: Currently, Council's Dog Control Bylaw allows dogs to be in specific public places such as cemeteries and crematoria but requires that dogs be leashed and/or under control at all times. Contact the Council for more information; or refer to the Dog Control Bylaw on Council's website for specific rules about dogs in cemeteries and crematoria.)

5.3 **Vehicles**

No private vehicle is to be left or taken into any cemetery after the cemetery gates are closed.

Except for a hearse or a Council authorised vehicle, vehicles are only permitted on marked roadways or any open area clearly designated for vehicles. The indicated speed limit and traffic rules are to be observed at all times. If there is no indicated speed limit, a vehicle may not exceed 15km/h.

The drivers of all vehicles must yield right of way to any funeral procession (cortege) in any cemetery. Drivers must comply with any request of the Council.

5.4 **Commercial photography or filming**

Any person using a Council-controlled cemetery or crematorium for the purpose of commercial photography or filming, or photography or filming for a media purpose, must first obtain written approval from the Council and the consent of the family or **Funeral Director. Funeral Directors** may only authorise the taking of photographs or film after they have consent from all affected persons.

5.5 **Trading**

Written approval from the Council must be obtained before entering or remaining in a cemetery for the purposes of monetary reward. The Council's approval may be subject to conditions.

6. **Interments and Disinterment**

6.1 **Interments**

Only an **approved person**, having obtained written permission from the Council, shall open a grave or open the ground for a burial.

The following persons may close any grave or the ground opened for a burial:

- Any person, including the family or friends of the deceased, under the supervision of the Council or **approved person**; and
- In all other cases, the Council or an **approved person** who has written permission from the Council to do so.

6.2 **Burial plot depth**

Plot depths can vary depending on environmental factors, requirements of relevant resource consents, and other factors as relevant to the **plot** location. **Plot** depth is prescribed by the Council when surveying the relevant **plot**.

Unless the survey provides otherwise, **plot** depths are as follows:

- For plots which are able to have two interments, the minimum depth of a grave for a first interment is 1.8 metres.
- For single interment **plots**, the depth of a grave will be 1.2 metres.

6.3 **Subsequent interments**

The Council may permit a second interment in a **plot** provided there is at least 1 metre of soil covering the casket last buried, as measured from the average surface level of the ground. Subsequent interments are not available in a **designated natural burial area**.

6.4 **Ash interments**

The number of ash interments in a burial **plot** is dependent on the depth of the **plot**. However, up to four ash interments can be placed in cremation **plots** where there is at a minimum 600mm of depth from natural ground level.

6.5 **Stillborn babies**

If your baby was stillborn or born before 20 weeks of pregnancy, we can talk you through your options for burial. Contact us to discuss how we can help.

6.6 **Returned service areas**

Burial in a Returned Services area is available for any person who served as a member of Her Majesty's Forces on eligible deployments, or the spouse or partner of someone who has served.

The standard burial or ash burial fee will apply. Please refer to the Cemetery and Crematorium Fees on Council's website for specific information on costs involved.

For more information on rules and eligibility contact the Council or your local Returned Servicemen's Association (RSA), or the New Zealand Veterans' Affairs Office.

6.7 **Disinterment**

Before a body or the remains of a body can be removed, a licence must be obtained from the Minister of Health under section 51 of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 and copy of this licence must be provided to Council.

The disinterment will only take place in the presence of the relevant **Funeral Director** or **approved person**, necessary staff, the relevant Ministry of Health inspectors, and any other person who has the prior written approval from the Council to be present.

The Council must give written approval before the disinterment takes place and will work with the licence holder to arrange a time for the disinterment to occur. This gives the Council the opportunity to make sure all the information is correct, and that proper health and safety precautions are taken.

If a body or the remains of a body have been removed from a burial **plot**, any subsequent **purchaser** will be told the **plot** has previously been used for a burial.

The person holding the disinterment licence under section 51 of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 is liable for any cemetery costs associated with the removal of the body or the remains. The Council is not liable to refund any fees for the original burial.

7. **Physical Works and Memorials**

7.1 **Procedure for installing memorials**

The installation of **memorials** can only be done by a person able to install such **memorials** in a manner that complies with New Zealand Headstones and Cemetery Monuments Standard (NZS 4242:2018), and who has completed a site and safety induction before undertaking any physical works. There are many local companies able to install **memorials** to the required standard.

In order to ensure that the **memorial** is placed on the correct **plot**, and that it complies with the bylaw and handbook, a plan and a copy of the design of the **memorial** must be submitted to the Council and approved by the Council in writing. The permit is granted to an **approved person** to install the **physical works** on behalf of the holder of the **Exclusive Right of Burial** or their **assignee**. Before granting a permit, the Council will confirm that:

- The correct owners of the **Exclusive Right of Burial** are requesting the work on behalf of all owners,
- The **memorial's** design, type and location on the **plot** meets the Council's requirements, and
- All outstanding fees and charges are paid.

Before commencing any **physical works** associated with the installation of a **memorial**, verbal notice of presence on the cemetery site must be given to the Cemetery Office.

An **approved person** undertaking **physical works**, including the placement of **memorials** associated with any **plot** shall:

- Adequately protect the surrounding **plots**, **memorials** and cemetery infrastructure;
- Not deposit any tools, debris, or materials on any adjacent **plot**, without prior approval from the holder of the **Exclusive Right of Burial** or their **assignee** to that adjacent **plot**;
- Remove all tools, debris, or materials used for the **physical works** as soon as practicable on the completion of the **physical works**; and
- Not obstruct any footpath or roadway when carrying out **physical works** unless prior written approval has been obtained from the Council.

On completion of the **physical works**, photographs of the front and side profiles of the **memorial** must be sent to the Council to confirm the positioning of the **memorial** in relation to the **plot**.

Physical works including their foundations must be completed to the satisfaction of the Council and must be compliant with the New Zealand Standard: Headstones and Cemetery Monuments (NZS 4242:2018).

8. Permitted physical works

Memorials will not be pinned to the **memorial strip** without prior written approval from the Council.

The following applies to any **physical works** in a cemetery:

- No **memorials** may be placed within the Gardens of Remembrance;
- Fences, kerbs or vaults may be constructed in an **open memorial area**;
- No fence or enclosure may exceed 1 metre in height;
- No concrete **memorial strips** will protrude above ground level.

In those areas designated as a **Returned Services Cemetery**, all **memorials** shall be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Veteran's Affairs New Zealand memorials handbook.

In areas designated as **limited lawn**, **memorials** that meet the following requirements are permitted:

- The **memorial** shall be placed on the **memorial strip** provided by the Council.
- The **memorial** base shall not stand higher than 150mm above the highest point of the **memorial strip** or ground level, whichever is the higher, and must not exceed a maximum depth (front to back) of 450mm.
- A space of 150mm clear of the **memorial** foundation base shall be maintained, both back and front.
- **Memorials** shall not exceed one metre above the lowest part of the **memorial strip** or ground level, including the levelling base

In those areas designated as a **cremation area**, **memorials** shall be constructed so as to ensure that the **memorial** fits within the **memorial strip** provided by the Council.

9. Decorating plots

9.1 Decorations and tributes

Decorations or tributes placed on a **plot** or **memorial strip** must not inhibit the maintenance and management of the cemetery.

Decorations and/or tributes may only be placed on the **memorial strip** of the concrete berm provided, except for during the five day period following interment, when **decorations**, tributes and other objects may be placed on the **plot**.

The Burial and Cremation Act 1964 gives the holder of an **Exclusive Right of Burial** the right to maintain and decorate the **memorial** and the **plot** so long that the decorations do not impede on the maintenance and management of the cemetery. After the five day period following interment, any **decoration** or tribute (including floral tributes) must be removed, or placed on or within the **memorial strip**, while providing at least 150mm clearance from the front and back edges of the **memorial strip**. This allows space for the Council to mow and maintain the cemetery.

9.2 Temporary markers

Temporary markers that do not exceed the **memorial** specifications described in section 6 of this handbook are permitted to remain in place until the permanent **memorial** is erected.

9.3 Removal of decorations

The Council may remove any **decorations** that are not on the **memorial strip** or which, in the opinion of the Council, have been neglected. Any unsafe **decorations** may be removed by the Council.

No person may remove any fixed item or plant growing in a cemetery, including kerbs, **memorials** or plants, without the prior written approval of the Council.

The family of the deceased can remove vases, flowers, wreaths and other **decorations** and tributes from their family member's **plot**.

9.4 **Donated plants**

Any person may provide or donate (subject to the written approval of the Council), **memorial** plants, shrubs, trees or flowers, for placing in a cemetery or garden of remembrance. The placement of these will be restricted to designated areas.

For safety reasons and in order to ensure that maintenance can occur, the Council may be required to trim, remove or cut back vegetation (including donated plants, shrubs, trees or flowers) placed in a cemetery or garden of remembrance.

10. Maintenance of plots, graves and memorials

10.1 **Maintenance**

Memorials must be kept in good repair. The Council does not take any responsibility for damage or vandalism to any **memorial**.

The holder(s) of the **Exclusive Right of Burial** to a **plot** (or their **assignee**) is responsible for regularly maintaining every **decoration**, **memorial** and other **physical works** associated with that **plot**. This includes appropriately securing all **decorations** and ensuring that the **decorations** do not prevent the proper maintenance of the cemetery. The **plot** must be appropriately maintained so that it does not fall into a state of disrepair or create a health and safety risk to any person visiting the cemetery.

Where a **memorial** has fallen into a state of disrepair and the Council determines that it is a health and safety risk, the Council may give the person responsible (the owner or their agent) three month's written notice to repair or remove the item. Failure to comply with a notice, or if the repairs have not been carried out to the Council's satisfaction within the period stated in that notice, will result in the Council undertaking any **physical works** necessary to maintain or repair the **memorial**, and recovering the cost of doing so from the owner of the **Exclusive Right of Burial** or their **assignee**.

The Council may also carry out works or remove any **memorial** that is considered dangerous to those frequenting and working within a cemetery.

10.2 **Removal of memorials**

No person may remove any **memorial strip** from any **plot** or grave unless they have permission from the Council.

The Council may remove any unauthorised **memorials**, or any **memorials** that have fallen into a state of disrepair and create a health and safety risk to visitors to the cemetery. Where the Council removes any unsafe **memorial**, or **memorials**, no responsibility will be taken for any damage sustained during that removal.

The removal of **memorials** must be undertaken in compliance with the Burial and Cremation (Removal of Monuments and Tablets) Regulations 1967.

11. Natural Burial

11.1 Designated natural burial areas

The Council offers **natural burials** in **designated natural burial areas**. A key goal for **natural burials** is that the burial process is environmentally friendly. This is achieved by not introducing anything synthetic to the ground, by not preventing or slowing natural decomposition processes, and by restoring the surface to a natural flora and fauna environment (a native bush reserve or park).

11.2 Natural burial applications

In addition to the requirements for burials set out above, **natural burial** applications must include:

- A death certificate or other documentation relating to the release of the body;
- Relevant information where a person died of a communicable disease; and
- Written confirmation by the applicant that the requirements have been met.

11.3 Plot allocation

Each new **natural burial** will be adjacent to the most recent burial. Prior to planting, sites, **plots** and graves will be maintained in long grass. The Council does not offer the option of reserving or selecting **plots**, or adjacent **plots**, in **designated natural burial areas**, or the purchase of an **Exclusive Right of Burial** for an adjacent **plot** at a time of recent bereavement and interment.

11.4 Natural burial interment

Only one interment of a casket or shroud is allowed in each **plot** in a **designated natural burial area**. There must be a minimum of 750mm depth of soil between the top of the casket or shroud and the natural ground level. Natural burial **plot** dimensions are to be 2.5m long by 1.8m wide.

To ensure **natural burials** are environmentally friendly and safe for people handling bodies, caskets or shrouds for **natural burial** must meet the following standards:

- Caskets and shrouds must be made from untreated or natural materials with no synthetic finishes, including attachments such as handles and linings. Natural oil finishes are acceptable.
- Shrouds must have a solid base, such as untreated timber, and must be fixed to the shroud, so it remains stable during the burial.
- Caskets or shrouds that are leaking fluids or have an unpleasant odour will not be accepted.
- The use of embalming fluids is not permitted with **natural burials**.
- Only non-synthetic and compostable materials should be placed within or on a **plot**.

Applications for additional ash interments in a natural burial plot may be approved by the Council. All ash interments in natural burial plots are to be contained in a biodegradable urn. Applications may be approved depending on the progressive establishment of natural vegetation after burials and maintenance considerations.

11.5 Decorations and memorials

In a **designated natural burial area**, no person may place any **memorial** or **decorate** any **plot** apart from the planting on the completion of each row or within five years. A temporary wooden grave marker made of untreated timber will be maintained for a maximum period of one year from the date of burial; and will not be replaced when it deteriorates.

11.6 Planting

A tree or shrub will be planted at the **natural burial** site. The planting will occur at a time when each cemetery row is occupied with burials or within five years from the date of the first burial, whichever comes first. The plant is to be selected by the family from a list of suitable plants specific to each **designated natural burial area**.

The choice of plants will vary along the boundary of the **designated natural burial area** where lower growing plants will be used. Council staff will supply and plant the tree or shrub, the cost of purchase and maintenance is included in the **plot** purchase fee. Over time, new trees and shrubs will be planted around and over sections of used **plots** to promote revegetation.

Provision for a combined **memorial** that lists those buried near the entrance of the **designated natural burial area** will be assessed depending on demand. The inscription of names onto the **memorial** would be optional, and at a cost to those choosing the option.

11.7 Maintenance of designated natural burial areas

The Council will maintain the **designated natural burial area**. When the **plots** are planted with trees, the area will be maintained as a bush revegetation site. Care and maintenance of the trees will be required until sufficiently developed and minimal maintenance is needed. Maintenance involves controlling vegetative growth around the planted tree seedlings, until they dominate the grasses and weed species. Ongoing control of plant pests such as old man's beard and gorse may be necessary. Any tree pruning from the area will be mulched and applied to the site.

The Council will attend to planting and maintenance. If a tree or shrub does not survive, the decision to replace the plant is left to the Council staff. This discretion will be dependent on whether surrounding plants are sufficiently occupying the ground, so that a replacement is either required or unnecessary. Plant selection considers those that benefit native bird species. Planting will not be undertaken from late autumn to early winter.

12. Crematorium

12.1 Application

Our cemetery office organises bookings and provides information about cemeteries, how to arrange cremations and use of the chapel.

Open: 8am-5pm Monday to Friday.

Phone: 06-759 6060

A Cremation Application form and all necessary certificates required by the Cremation Regulations 1973 must be completed and received by the Council no less than one **working day** prior to the time of the cremation.

Please refer to the Cemetery and Crematorium Fees on Council's website for specific information on the costs associated with a cremation. A cremation may only take place if all applicable fees have been paid, or arrangements for these fees to be paid have been made with the Council.

12.2 The cremation

If there is no **Funeral Director** present during a chapel service, two Council staff members are required to be present at the applicant's cost.

Subject to written approval from the Council, representatives of the deceased person may see the casket placed in the charging hall, but no inspection of the actual process of the cremation is permitted.

12.3 Casket for cremation

The following criteria must be met to ensure the safe handling of your loved one.

A casket for cremation must be constructed so that it will not distort or collapse whilst being handled during the normal course of events leading up to a cremation.

The casket must:

- Be constructed from materials free of PVC and contaminants that will cause excessive smoke when combusted and will not exceed the Crematorium's Taranaki Regional Council Air discharge permit or any subsequent amendment of the discharge permit.
- Have a flat bottom and not exceed 220cm long x 80cm wide (including handles) x 68cm deep
- Be constructed of robust material so it will not distort or collapse whilst being handled in the events leading up to the cremation.
- Be lined internally with impervious material that is at least 100 mm thick to prevent any leakage from the casket.
- Have a name plate, label or inscription stating the family name and at least one other name of the deceased whose remains are to be cremated in the casket.

Materials that are unsuitable for combustion in the course of a cremation may be used on the exterior of a casket if they can be removed easily prior to cremation.

The Council may require casket furnishings to be removed prior to cremation. If you wish to have any items returned to you, please request this in writing prior to the cremation.

12.4 Medical enquiries required

Because of the responsibilities under The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the Council requires that before a body will be accepted for cremation, a certificate must be produced confirming that enquiries have been made of the family or medical practitioner in relation to whether the deceased has been treated with strontium-89 (for bone metastases), or iodine-125 (for prostate cancer). If this is the case, the safety of cremation must be confirmed with a medical practitioner licensed under The Radiation Protection Act 1965 who prescribed the treatment before the cremation is permitted to proceed.

12.5 Items prohibited for cremation

To ensure the cremator is kept in good operational order, to prevent breakdowns, ensure we can retrieve your loved one's **ashes**, and minimise our impact on the environment, there are a number of items which are prohibited from entering the cremation chamber.

The non-exhaustive list below covers examples of items that cannot be placed in the coffin. Talk to your **Funeral Director** or contact the Council for further guidance on items which are prohibited for cremation:

- Alcohol.
- Ammunition or explosive material.
- Batteries.
- Computers.
- Crash helmets/hardhats.
- Die cast metals/aluminium/copper (large items only).
- Footwear made of PVC/rubber.
- Garden spades, forks etc.
- Glass.
- Lighters.
- Mattresses (usually external).
- Mobile phones.
- Motorcycle leathers.
- Pacemakers.
- Prosthetic limbs.
- PVC in all forms.
- Soft toys – over 300mm long.
- Wet suits and surfboards.
- Products containing polystyrene foams.
- Products that are volatile (may explode, burn fiercely or be hazardous to the environment and crematorium operators).

When you are preparing a loved one for cremation, please make sure none of the above items are included or inform your **Funeral Director** so that they can be easily removed by them or the family before cremation.

Your **Funeral Director** will need to provide a declaration to the Council that the casket contains none of the items prohibited for cremation as listed above.

12.6 Remembrance garden

The fee for cremation in Council's crematorium includes **ashes** placement in the Garden of Remembrance. Placement of **ashes** from cremations conducted elsewhere will incur a fee. No **memorials** are permitted within the remembrance garden.

13. Further information

Our cemetery office can answer any further questions you may have relating to the management of Council-controlled cemeteries and crematorium. The office is open from 8am until 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding **public holidays**.

Contact us on 06-759 6060 or enquiries@npdc.govt.nz, or visit our website at <https://www.newplymouthnz.com/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium>