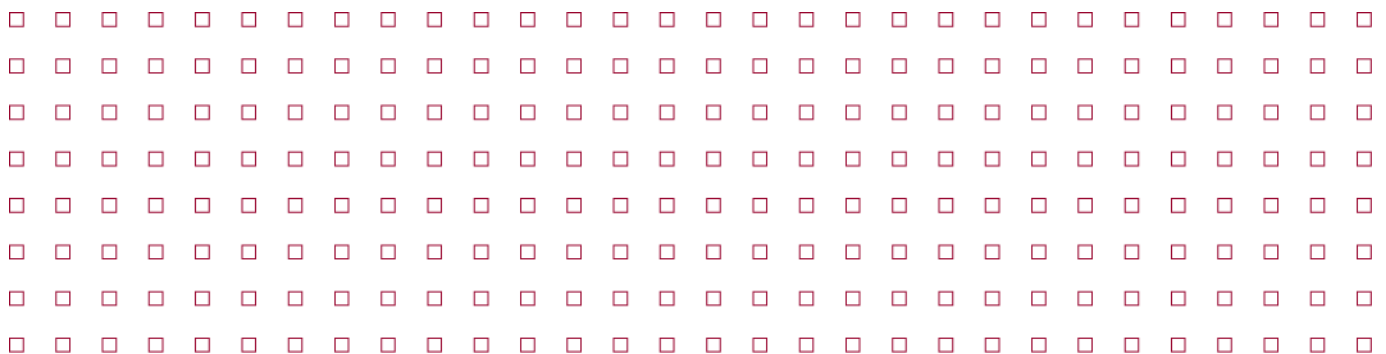




# **The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008**

## Guidance to applicants

20 February 2012



Alternative format versions of this report are available on request from [coronersandburialscorrespondence@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:coronersandburialscorrespondence@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

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## **Your right to inspect the medical certificates**

1. You have applied for cremation of the remains of a person who has died. After you have made your application you will have the opportunity to exercise your right to inspect the medical certificates that will be completed by doctors which relate to the cause of the death of the deceased person. Inspection of the forms will take place before the cremation is authorised by the medical referee (the doctor attached to the crematorium).
2. Part 5 of the application form deals with your right to inspect the medical certificates. The funeral director should have explained this right to you, but you might find it helpful to read about it as well.

## The medical certificates

3. There are two medical certificates. One is completed by the doctor who treated the deceased person during his or her last illness, with the other being completed by a doctor who did not treat the deceased person and who is completely independent of the first doctor. The second doctor has to examine the deceased person, and discuss the cause of death with the first doctor and at least one other person.
  
4. If you know the cause of death and do not have any concerns about it you may decide that there is very little reason why you should need to inspect these medical certificates. However, if you do have doubts or were surprised that the death happened when it did, you may decide that you would like to exercise your right to inspect the medical certificates.

## Implants

5. You may wish to think about whether the person that has died had any implants fitted during life. This is because some implants may cause damage to the cremator, and may even be a serious health and safety risk if they explode during the process of cremation. You should note the existence of any potentially hazardous implants in the application form at question 10. A list of potentially dangerous implants is contained at Annex A.

## **If you do not want to inspect the medical certificates yourself**

6. You can nominate someone else to inspect the medical certificates on your behalf. You might want to do this, for example, if you think someone else would be in a better position to go through the certificates (perhaps because that person was present at the death and you were not).

## **If you have serious concerns about the death**

7. If you have serious concerns about the cause of death and believe the case should be investigated by a coroner, you should contact the coroner's office right away. Your funeral director will be able to provide contact details and any other assistance. If the death was unnatural or violent, it should have already been referred to a coroner by a doctor or by the police.



## Where you can inspect the medical certificates

8. The medical certificates will be available for you to inspect at the crematorium office for up to 48 hours after you are informed that they have been received there. It is important that you can be contacted during this period.
  
9. When you attend the crematorium to inspect the certificates, the medical referee may be able to give you advice on the cause of death, but you should be aware that he or she may charge a fee for this service. As the referee is often also a working doctor, you will need to take account of this when arranging the time of the meeting.
  
10. If the funeral is scheduled to be held within the next two or three days, it could be difficult to seek further advice from the medical referee in addition to inspecting the medical certificates.

## **Annex A – Battery powered and other implants that could cause problems during cremation**

- Pacemakers
- Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICDs)
- Cardiac resynchronization therapy devices (CRTDs)
- Implantable loop recorders
- Ventricular assist devices (VADs): Left ventricular assist devices (LVADs), Right ventricular assist devices (RVADs), or Biventricular assist devices (BiVADs)
- Implantable drug pumps including intrathecal pumps
- Neurostimulators (including for pain & Functional Electrical Stimulation)
- Bone growth stimulators
- Hydrocephalus programmable shunts
- Any other battery powered implant
- Fixion nails
- Dental mercury amalgam
- Brachytherapy to the prostate, i.e. radioactive iodine-125 seeds (advice from the Department of Radiology and Urology at the Royal London Free and Whittington Hospitals states that iodine 125 seeds produce radiation for about one year, therefore if death occurs within 12 months following implantation the seeds should be removed)