



5 October 2022

**s 9(2)(a)**

By email: **s 9(2)(a)**  
Ref: H2022012590

Tēnā koe **s 9(2)(a)**

### **Response to your request for official information**

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health) on 13 September 2022 for information relating to medical referees. You specifically requested:

Information about how to complete the Certificate as required under the Cremation Regulations 1973.

*“Could you please let me know how to find the list of Medical Referees in my region?  
Thank you.*

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/burial-and-cremation-act-1964/completing-death-documents/cremation-certificate-medical-practitioner-or-nurse-practitioner>

*Information about how to complete the Certificate as required under the Cremation Regulations 1973.”*

Manatū Hauora does not hold a complete list of medical referees. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

To obtain approval for a cremation, you should contact your local crematorium authority, for example by searching online for crematoria in your region.

Please find attached guidance prepared by Manatū Hauora on the ‘*The roles, responsibilities, and duties of medical referees*’. You will see that our guidance includes the following advice:

*“The appointments of Medical Referees are made by the crematorium authority...the crematorium authority should be the single point of contact, and the only conduit, for accessing the Medical Referee. Applicants and Funeral Directors should not approach the Medical Referee directly; all contact should be via the crematorium authority...*

*.... the Medical Referee to have no contact with any applicant ... and to undertake any certification in the privacy of their own premises away from any possible influence... making the address and contact details of the Medical Referee publicly available... may result in the Medical Referee having... loss of independence and the possibility of influence or pressure from [a] relative or ... Funeral Director.*

*There are anecdotal reports of Funeral Directors urging a Medical Referee to complete a permission at short notice or to not ask verification questions. Some of these anecdotal reports even suggest that some Funeral Directors have told the Medical Referee they will take their application to a different Medical Referee rather than find the information required.*

*On considering how best to protect the independence of the office of the Medical Referee, the Ministry considers that the crematorium authority should be the single point of contact, and the only conduit, for accessing the Medical Referee. This would mean that applicants and Funeral Directors approaching the Medical Referee directly should not be permitted and all contact should be via the crematorium authority.”*

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā



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