

Overview

This standard is for those working in the exhumation of coffins and remains.

The requirement to work within clear legal provisions and high standards of hygiene is extremely important. If you are working with machinery you should be trained and hold certification in line with relevant legislation

You must carry out your work in a way which will minimise the impact on the natural environment.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. confirm that you have the required licences and authorisation available to exhume coffins or remains
2. carry out exhumation in accordance with instructions and specifications
3. locate the identified grave for exhumation
4. assess the risks associated with the site and the required activity
5. erect screening around the identified grave
6. wear suitable clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE)
7. select tools and equipment appropriate to the type of exhumation and soil conditions
8. prepare, use and maintain equipment and machinery for exhumation in accordance with specifications, safely and correctly
9. probe carefully to locate the coffin in the grave site
10. dig to within the specified distance from the coffin
11. disinfect the soil and contaminated areas throughout the process
12. clear soil around the coffin leaving sufficient room to access safely and correctly
13. place lifting aids correctly and lift in a manner to minimise damage to the coffin and remains
14. handle the coffin following initial lift in a manner which is appropriate to the soil and coffin conditions
15. place coffin and remains in a suitable container in accordance with relevant legal requirements and specifications
16. restore the grave site tidily and safely in accordance with relevant legal requirements and specifications
17. maintain communication with colleagues and those involved in, or affected by, your work
18. show care and respect for the deceased throughout the operation
19. process equipment and materials used safely and hygienically on completion of the operation
20. carry out your work in accordance with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements, codes of practice and organisational policies

Exhume coffins and remains

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the required licences and authorisation you must have before carrying out exhumations
2. the relevant legislation and codes of practice covering the exhumation of coffins and remains
3. why thorough preparation for exhumations is important
4. why it is important to locate the correct grave and how to do so
5. how to identify hazards and assess risks prior to exhuming coffins and remains
6. how to select, prepare, use and maintain tools, equipment and machinery in a safe and correct condition
7. why it is important to screen and cover the site from public view and how to do so
8. the types of clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) suitable for the activity
9. how to locate the coffin and remains
10. why it is important to probe in a way which minimises damage to the coffin and remains and how to do so
11. why preliminary digging should only go to a specified distance from the coffin and what this distance may be
12. why disinfecting contaminated areas throughout the process and at the end of the operation is important
13. materials used for disinfecting soil and contaminated areas around the grave site
14. how much room is required around the coffin to access safely and correctly
15. how to place lifting aids and lift the coffin in a way which minimises damage to the coffin and remains
16. how to handle the coffin following initial lift according to the soil and coffin conditions
17. why the coffin and remains should be placed in a suitable container and what this container may be
18. how to restore the grave site tidily and safely in accordance with relevant legal requirements and specifications
19. the importance of maintaining communication with those involved in, or affected by, your work and how this should be done
20. the importance of showing respect to the deceased while exhuming coffins and remains

21. how to process equipment and materials safely and hygienically following exhumation
22. your responsibilities under relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, codes of practice and organisational policies

Exhume coffins and remains

Scope/range

A. select and use the following types of equipment when exhuming coffins and remains:

1. probing
2. measuring
3. digging
4. safety
5. protective clothing
6. shell, coffin or suitable container
7. shoring
8. breathing equipment

B. select and use the following types of material when exhuming coffins and remains:

1. disinfectant
2. lime
3. vegetable charcoal

C. respond correctly to the following soil conditions when exhuming coffins and remains:

1. wet
2. dry
3. clay
4. sand / shingle

Glossary

Types of equipment:

- probing
- measuring
- digging
- safety
- protective clothing
- shell, coffin or suitable container
- shoring

Types of material:

- disinfectant
- lime
- vegetable charcoal

Specifications: drawings, schedules, method statements, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), manufacturers' guidelines, organisational policies, relevant legal documents.

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Relevant Occupations Grave Digger

Suite Horticulture

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