



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**

**APPLICATION FORM FOR A PERMIT UNDER THE  
*ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (SEA DUMPING) ACT 1981*  
FOR A BURIAL AT SEA**

**Introduction**

This application form at Attachment A is to be used when applying for a permit for a burial at sea. Under Section 19 of the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* (the Sea Dumping Act) the Minister may grant, or refuse to grant a permit.

A copy of the death certificate is to be forwarded with the application form.

A copy of the relevant extract from the Ship Captain's Medical Guide concerning the preparation of a body for burial at sea is at Attachment B.

The permit will be subject to the terms and conditions as outlined in the example of a draft permit at Attachment C.

The most difficult task in arranging a burial at sea is locating an area which does not conflict with other user groups (such as trawl fishermen or shipping) and which is at a sufficient depth (approximately 2000m) to prevent the body being shifted inshore by currents or tidal movements. This could mean that the location is a long distance offshore. It is suggested that you talk to the local charter operators in the area who may be able to recommend a site to you. Once we have received the application the suitability of the site will need to be cleared through State and Commonwealth government agencies. This usually takes 3-4 days.

Under the Act, an application fee of \$1,675 must be forwarded before a permit may be issued. The Minister may waive the requirement for payment of all or part of such fee where it is considered necessary or desirable to do so.

**Completed applications should be sent to:**

Director  
Ports and Marine Section  
Approvals and Wildlife Division  
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Further information** may be obtained from the Sea Dumping Program

Ph: (02) 6274 2995

**APPLICATION FOR BURIAL AT SEA**

1. Identity of applicant - (name, address, postal address if different, telephone/ facsimile number and email)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Identity of the deceased - (name and address. **Note**—a copy of certificate of death is to be provided)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Summary of reasons for burial at sea.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Carrier of the deceased:
  - (a) name, address, postal address if different, telephone/facsimile number and email of owner of vessel, aircraft or platform proposed to be used for burial operation;
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) person in charge of vessel, aircraft or platform to be used for burial operation;
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (c) name and port of registration of vessel; type, model, serial number, nationality of aircraft; name or number of platform (whichever applies).

5. Transfer procedures:
  - (a) intended place of loading;
  
  - (b) date of proposed transfer for burial at sea;
  
  - (c) method of preparation of the body (see notes attached).
  
6. Characteristics of proposed burial site: (a map may be included)
  - (a) geographical position (latitude and longitude);
  
  - (b) method of determination of position during burial operation;
  
  - (c) depth of water (must be over 1000 metres);
  
  - (d) distance from nearest land;
  
  - (e) other characteristics of the site, if relevant;
  
  - (f) reasons for selection of proposed site.
  
7. Proposed route to burial site.

**EXTRACT FROM SHIP CAPTAIN'S MEDICAL GUIDE**

**Burial at sea**

**NOTE: THE BODY IS NOT TO BE EMBALMED.**

If there is no suspicion of foul play, or if for any reason it is not possible to retain the body, or if so requested by next-of-kin, the body may be buried at sea. In this case it is not necessary to do more than lay the body on a flat surface, straighten the legs and arms and interlock the fingers over the thighs. The hair should be brushed off the forehead, the face washed, and the jaw secured by passing a bandage under the chin and over the top of the head, where it may be tied or clipped. The body should be sewn into a shroud.

Bear in mind that the shroud needs to be made of a very strong material and weighted sufficiently to ensure rapid sinking and permanent submersion of the body. There should be three or four slits or openings in the material to allow the gases of decomposition to escape and prevent flotation due to trapped air.

Burial should not take place in soundings in any part of the world.

After preparation the body should be placed upon an improvised platform resting on the ship's side rail and a suitable trestle or other support, covered by an ensign, secured to the inboard edge of the platform. Wooden blocks screwed under the platform and resting against the ship's side rail will prevent the platform sliding outboard when the inboard end is raised to allow the body to slide from under the flag into the sea. It is very important to ensure that the whole operation proceeds smoothly and respectfully without unseemly mishaps. If the ship is small and there is a heavy sea, precautions must be taken to ensure that the body will not be prematurely lost and will not fail to drop cleanly into the sea at the right moment. This may warrant fastening guide rails on the platform. The seamen allocated to perform the disposal must be carefully briefed. At the words of the Committal, and on receipt of a discreet signal, they must raise the inboard end of the platform to allow the body to slide from under the ensign into the sea.

Record in the official log book the exact time and place of burial.

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**CONDITIONS FOR THE BURIAL AT SEA**

1. Conditions detailed in this permit are additional to those, which may be imposed by State departments and agencies in areas under their jurisdiction in relation to the burial at sea.
2. The burial is to take place at....., approximately..... km from.....
3. The body is to be enclosed in a suitably weighted canvas shroud, in accordance with the provisions of the most recent edition of the Ship Captain's Medical Guide.
4. Following the burial operation a report is to be submitted to the Marine and Water Division, Environment Australia, GPO Box 787, CANBERRA ACT 2601 (Attention: Director, Marine and International Section) detailing:
  - time and date of burial;
  - depth of water;
  - position of burial (latitude and longitude);
  - name of vessel/aircraft;
  - name and address of owners of vessel/aircraft;
  - person in charge of vessel/aircraft; and
  - port of registration.

A copy of the Certificate of Burial or equivalent statutory document is to be attached to the above report.