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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

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14-08

TO: LOCAL REGISTRARS OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS
CHIEF DEPUTY REGISTRARS OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS
MEDICAL EXAMINERS/CORONERS

SUBJECT: UPDATE TO ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) 86-12: DISPOSITION
PERMIT FOR SHIPPED IN WHOLE BODY HUMAN REMAINS

Background We have received recent requests to clarify policy relating to issuance of disposition permits when whole body human remains from out-of-state are shipped into California for disposition. Local Registrars have submitted a number of reports indicating that ship-in burial permits are being presented to the registrar of a county other than where the whole body disposition is planned. This letter shall serve to update policy outlined in ACL 86-12, to clarify which registration district shall issue the disposition permit.

This letter does not pertain to remains that are cremated prior to being shipped into California, as no risk of communicable disease exists. Policy related to the issuance of disposition permits for cremated remains is outlined in ACL 02-03.

Existing Policy ACL 86-12 stipulates that when human remains are shipped in from out-of-state, the transit or removal permit issued where the death occurred is accepted and retained by the local registrar of the registration district of the shipping destination of the body. The ACL is used as a basis upon which a California Permit for Disposition of Human Remains is issued.

Policy Update Vital Records (VR) policy outlined in ACL 86-12 indicates that when human remains are shipped into California for disposition, the permit shall be issued by the local registrar (LR) of the “shipping destination” of the body. This letter serves to update and clarify ACL 86-12 to

ensure the local health department receiving the remains may exercise their authority under Health and Safety Code (H&SC) Sections 120175 and 7502. The “shipping destination”, or “district into which the human remains have been transported” under H&SC Section 103085, shall be construed to mean the CA local registration district where the whole body disposition will take place.

VR policy regarding the issuance of the disposition permit for human remains shipped into California is based on H&SC Sections 103085 and 7502.

Also, the death and fetal death handbook indicates that “where a death has occurred from a disease considered infectious, contagious, or communicable and dangerous to public health, no permit may be issued except under such conditions as may be prescribed by the health department.” The local health officer of the county accepting the whole body for disposition has oversight over prevention of the spread of communicable disease, pursuant to H&SC Section 120175.

The document authorizing the transit or removal of human remains, issued pursuant to the laws of the jurisdiction where the death occurred, and the application for a California Disposition Permit shall be presented to the local registrar in the district where the whole body disposition shall take place. The local registrar will review the request, and issue the California Disposition permit pursuant to H&SC Section 103085, in accordance to local rules pursuant to H&SC Section 7502.

The table below details disposition scenarios, and the district that would issue the disposition permit.

CA Disposition	District Responsible for Permit Issuance
Interment/ Burial	Permit to be issued by LR in the district where the interment will take place.
Burial at Sea	Disposition at sea off the coast of California; permit shall be issued by LR closest in proximity to where the disposition at sea is planned.
Scientific Use	Body transported into California for scientific use; permit shall be issued by the LR of district where facility is located.
Cremation	Permit shall be issued by LR where the cremation will occur.

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**Requested
Action**

Local registrars are asked to share this information with funeral homes within the local registration district.

Questions

If you should have any questions about this matter please contact CA-EDRS Helpdesk at (916) 552-8123 and ask to speak to a Policy Analyst for assistance.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Tony Agurto, MPA
State Registrar
Assistant Deputy Director
Center for Health Statistics and Informatics