

BOARD OF HEALTH



TOWN OF HEATH
Massachusetts

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A HOME BURIAL PLOT

- It is preferable that the home burial plot be established and approved before death.
- The use of toxic embalming agents are prohibited without the express written permission of the Heath Board of Health. Green burial is encouraged. See www.greenburialma.org for more information.
- A minimum depth of 3-4 feet of soil is required for the plot.
- Slopes steeper than 1:3 should be avoided and may require deeper coverage with special soils.
- A wetlands determination must be made. Applicant is responsible for the fee (approx. \$100 or more). See attached list of professional wetlands scientists.
- Site must be at least 100 feet from wells, 100 feet from wetlands, 25 feet from roads, and 50 feet from all abutters. If applicant provides an official survey of the property, distance from abutters may be reduced to 25 feet.
- Contact the Heath Board of Health to begin process.
- Locate the four corners of the proposed plot site. Site must be a minimum of 10' x 10'.
- Contact professional wetlands scientist to review proposed site and sign application.
- Submit application and map of the site with measurements and setbacks shown (including any other pertinent landmarks if possible) to Board of Health (see contact info below). After tentative approval by the Heath Board of Health, a copy of the application and a map of the site must be sent for approval to the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection at:

James Gibbs
DEP, Western Regional Office
436 Dwight Street
Springfield, MA 01103
413-755-2299
Email: james.gibbs@state.ma.us

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- Once approved by DEP, the plot must be registered at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds. Registration of the plot does not guarantee future access to the burial plot after transfer of property. Please consult legal counsel for advice.
- After the plot is registered, the Board of Health issues the final approval of the home burial plot.

The approval of a home burial plot does not change the state requirements for a burial permit and death certificate.

Residents should coordinate with the Burial Agent (currently Town Clerk 413-337-4934 ext 6) on these matters.

More information can be found online at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/comm-sanitation/burial-and-cremation.html>

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APPLICATION FOR HOME BURIAL PLOT

Authorized Applicant (property owner or agent) _____

Mailing Address _____

Property Street Address _____

Property ID (see tax bill or call the Board of Health) _____

Dimension of Plot (min. 10' x 10') _____ Proposed number of graves _____

Distance from Roads (please give road name/s & Ft) _____

Distance from Abutter(s) within 100': 1)Name _____ Ft _____

2)Name _____ Ft _____ 3)Name _____ Ft _____

Distance from Wetlands _____ Distance from any Well _____

Approx Slope of Plot (# ft drop in 10'; a steep slope may require increased depth of soil) _____

GPS Location (if possible) _____

Means of marking location for future owners (iron pin, stones, metal tape, etc.) _____

1) Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Approval and comments (if any) from Professional Wetlands Scientist _____

2) PWS Signature _____ Date _____

3) Initial Approval BOH _____ Date _____

Approval of DEP and comments if any _____

4) DEP Signature _____ Date _____

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Please include here a simple map/drawing with wetlands and roads, setbacks, etc noted and any other pertinent information of the proposed burial location:

Book and page of deed notation from Registry of Deeds after DEP approval (please attach copy from registry to be filed with the town for future owners.)

Book _____ Page _____ Date recorded _____

Registration does not guarantee future access to burial plot after transfer of property. Please check with your lawyer.

Final Approval BOH _____ Date _____

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**Any Professional Wetlands Scientist can be used
Names of Local Professional Wetlands Scientists:**

William Lattrell, PWS
Heath, MA
413-337-5792

Ward Smith, PWS
Wendell, MA
978-544-5607

Emily Stockman, PWS
Plainfield, MA
413-743-1372

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TOWN OF HEATH Massachusetts Checklist for Home Burial

This checklist is for home burial only.

It is preferable that the home burial plot be established and approved before death (see BOH).

The use of toxic embalming agents are prohibited without the express written permission of the Heath Board of Health. Please see green burial guidelines at <http://www.greenburial.org> for recommended practices.

The pronouncement of death must be done by a licensed medical certifier.

The designated survivor (which can be a family member, friend or other acquaintance) then works with the Burial Agent (currently the Heath Town Clerk 413-337-4934 ext 6) to obtain the official death certificate and burial permit via the online system, the EDRS, Electronic Death Registration System.

The recommended time from death until burial for home burial is 36-48 hours so it is important to have as much in place ahead of time as possible. It is helpful to secure and fill out a completed Informant Worksheet that will provide the legal and personal information about the decedent. A link to this form is:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/vital-records/informantworksheetparta.pdf>

Veterans need to also fill out:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/vital-records/veteranworksheetpartb.pdf>

There is a very good link to more information on burial and preparation at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/comm-sanitation/burial-and-cremation.html>