






Green Burial Guide

Benefits & Steps for Approval

A green burial emphasizes simplicity and environmental sustainability. It avoids the use of embalming chemicals, metal caskets, and concrete vaults, allowing the body to decompose naturally and return to the earth.

Benefits of a Green Burial

-  **Environmentally Friendly:** Reduces carbon footprint and avoids toxic chemicals
-  **Cost-Effective:** Typically less expensive than traditional burials.
-  **Natural Setting:** Offers a peaceful, natural final resting place.

Massachusetts
Department of Public
Health



Green Burial Council:
Standards and
Certification



Steps for Approval of Green Burials in Massachusetts

Consult Local Board of Health

Contact your local Board of Health to understand specific regulations and requirements for green burials in your area.

Select a Suitable Burial Site

Ensure the site complies with local zoning laws and environmental regulations. Sites must be away from water sources to prevent contamination.

Obtain Necessary Permits

Burial Permit: Required for any burial in Massachusetts. Apply through the town clerk's office where the death occurred.

Disinterment Permit: Needed if the body will be moved from a temporary to a permanent burial site.

Prepare the Burial Site

Burial Depth: must be at least 3.5 feet from the top of the casket or body to the ground surface.

Distance: Maintain an adequate distance from water sources as per Massachusetts regulations to prevent contamination (Mass.gov).

Arrange for Transportation and Burial

Coordinate the transport of the body to the burial site. This can be managed by the family or through a funeral home specializing in green burials.

Additional Considerations

Markers and Memorials: Often, green burials use natural markers such as trees, plants, or simple engraved stones.

Maintenance and Conservation: Many green burial sites are maintained as natural preserves, requiring minimal upkeep.

For more information, contact your local Board of Health or a certified green burial provider.

Legal Requirements for Home Burials

Notify the Local Board of Health

Inform them of the intent to conduct a home burial.

Comply with State and Local Regulations

Ensure the site and burial practices meet all health and safety standards. Home burials are possible if the property is controlled by the decedent's family and approved by local authorities (Mass.gov).