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| **Purpose** | This is a guide to respond to the passing away of tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha during the time they are engaging with our service. |
| **Scope** | Tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha and their whānau.  Our leadership team and health care workers. |
| **Policy** | Our health care workers and the leadership team ensure that the deceased/tūpāpaku is cared for with privacy and dignity.  We adhere to the legal and cultural processes at all times. |
| **References** | |
| **Legislation** | Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 2021Burial and Cremation Act 1964Burial and Cremation Amendment Act 2016[Coroners Act 1988](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1988/0111/latest/DLM134197.html)Cremation Regulations 1973Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001 (Sect31) |
| **Guidelines** | [Coronial Services of New Zealand](https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/coronial-services/)  [Funeral Director Association NZ: What to do when someone dies.](https://funeraldirectors.co.nz/planning-a-funeral/what-to-do-when-someone-dies/)  [Govt.NZ. What you need to do when someone dies.](https://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/death-and-bereavement/what-you-need-to-do-when-someone-dies/)  [HealthEd: Funerals in Aotearoa after a death by suicide: Guidance for whānau, kaumātua, funeral directors, celebrants and faith leaders - HE2613](https://healthed.govt.nz/products/funerals-in-aotearoa-after-a-death-by-suicide-guidance-for-whanau-kaumatua-funeral-directors-celebrants-and-faith-leaders-he2613)  [Information for doctors and nurse practitioners](https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/information-for-doctors-and-nurse-practitioners/your-responsibilities/#Your_responsibilities) Justice GOVT. NZ. [Get help after someone dies](https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/the-familys-rights/get-help-after-someone-dies/). [MOH: Te Ara Whakapiri: Principles and guidance for the last days of life.](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/te-ara-whakapiri-principles-and-guidance-last-days-life) [Te Whatu Ora. Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/for-the-health-sector/health-sector-guidance/burial-and-cremation-act-1964/completing-death-documents/medical-certificate-of-cause-of-death/) [Te Whatu Ora. Referring a death to the coroner.](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/for-the-health-sector/health-sector-guidance/burial-and-cremation-act-1964/referring-a-death-to-the-coroner/) |
| **Our related**  **policies/**  **procedures** | Adverse events  Health and safety |
| **Definitions** | |
| **Death by natural causes** | A death that is primarily caused by a disease or illness not directly influenced by external forces. |
| **Unnatural deaths** | All deaths that can’t be described as death by natural causes are categorised as unnatural deaths. |
| **Tūpāpaku** | The body of the deceased. |

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| **Processes: Death by natural causes** | | |
| **At the time of death:** | Tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha:   * Do not respond when spoken to. * Do not breathe or move. * Eyes may be open or closed, and their jaw will relax. * Skin is pale and cool. * Has no pulse.   Health care worker:   * Make a note of the time when tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha are identified having passed away. | |
| **Responsibility** | **Action** | **Timeframe** |
| **Health care worker being present or finding tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha has passed away at our service’s premises or during a home visit.** | Phone the manager/team leader and confirm who is responsible for the following actions:   * Contacting the deceased’s/tūpāpaku GP. * Contacting whānau. * Contacting funeral director.   The actions are implemented as discussed. | Immediately  (Contact on-call manager/team leader and on-call GP if necessary.) |
| **Our team** | **Supports:**   * The deceased’s/tūpāpaku whānau and friends. * Initiating tikanga Māori processes. * [Cultural relevant processes](https://healthpages.co.nz/directory/categories/ethnic-support?p=1&category=284&zoom=15&is_mile=0&directory_radius=50&view=list). * People the deceased/tūpāpaku shared accommodation and activities with. | From the time tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha has passed away. |
| **Manager/team leader** | **Ensures:**  The Medical Certificate of cause of deathmust accompany the deceased’s/ tūpāpaku body when it is moved from our premises. | At the time the body of the deceased/tūpāpaku is moved. |
| **Ensures:**  De-brief for staff and people the deceased/tūpāpaku shared accommodation and activities with. | Within 48 hours |
| **Informs** the following people and agencies of the death:   * Clinical services who have been involved in the care of the deceased/tūpāpaku. * Agency that provided funding. * Referrer. * Our board of trustees/directors or owner. * Disability/[Whaikaha services reporting](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/for-service-providers/critical-incidents-death/). | Within 5 working days of the death.  Within 24/hour of the death. |

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| **Processes: Death by unnatural causes** | | |
| **Unnatural causes** | Tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha:   * Died unexpectedly. * Died from an accident or injury (including fall, poisoning or drowning). * Died in a violent (including homicide) or unnatural way (including suicide). * Died during or following a medical procedure. | |
| **Reporting** | Death by unnatural causes are referred to the coroner. | |
| **Medical certificate** | A medical certificate of causes of death cannot be issued by a medical practitioner unless the coroner directs them to do so. | |
| **Responsibility** | **Action** | **Timeframe** |
| **Health care worker finds tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha dead at our premises or during a home visit.** | * Call 111 and request the attendance of the police who will act as the coroner’s agent. * Follow the police’s instructions. * Call the manager/team leader and request their attendance at the premises. * Do not remove or change anything from the body of the deceased/ tūpāpaku or the environment they were found at. * Keep any other person away from the area. * Wait for the police to arrive. | Immediately. |
| **Manager/team leader** | * If the police is in agreement, notifies the deceased’s/tūpāpaku whānau. * If whānau is not known or cannot be contacted:   + Follows the instructions of the police.   + Contacts a funeral director. * Commences the adverse event process. | No later than within 24 hours or as instructed by the police. |
| **Our team** | **Supports:**   * The deceased’s/tūpāpaku whānau and friends. * Tikanga Māori processes. * [Cultural relevant processes](https://healthpages.co.nz/directory/categories/ethnic-support?p=1&category=284&zoom=15&is_mile=0&directory_radius=50&view=list). * Staff and people the deceased/ tūpāpaku shared accommodation and activities with. | From the day tangata whai ora/tangata whaikaha was found dead. |
| **Manager/team leader** | **Ensures:**  De-brief for staff and people the deceased/tūpāpaku shared accommodation and activities with. | Within 48 hours. |
| **Informs** the following people and agencies of the death:   * Clinical services who have been involved in the care of the deceased/ tūpāpaku. * Agency that provided funding. * Referrer. * Board of trustees/directors or owner. * HealthCERT by completing [Section 31 report](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/certification-health-care-services/information-providers-health-care-services/notifying-incident-under-section-31). * Disability/[Whaikaha services reporting](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/for-service-providers/critical-incidents-death/). | No later than 2 working days of the death – or as required by specific agencies. |
| **Provides:**  A report to the coroner if requested. | Coroner determines the time frame. |
| **Arranges:**  Participation of staff in coroner’s inquest meetings**.** | As required by the coroner. |

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| **Additional support processes** | |
| **Responsibility** | **Activity** |
| **Our management team** | **Ensures:**   * Relevant tikanga is implemented by mana whenua. * Relevant tikanga and rituals as required by whānau are implemented. * The cultural and religious processes are respected. * Staff and friends of the person who passed away are supported to attend tangi and/or funeral arrangements. * Staff, whānau and friends are supported to celebrate the life of the person who passed away. * Staff and people the deceased/ tūpāpaku shared accommodation and activities with get support with their grief process. |