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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.
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| **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.
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| **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.
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