



# Burial on Private Property

## Guidance Document

August 2021

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Environmental Health  
Solid Waste Program

In Alaska, state laws and regulations are relatively silent on the matter of burying human remains on private property. However, many communities in the State of Alaska have local ordinances that address this issue. Contact your local or regional government office or a local funeral home or mortuary for information on the burial of human remains in your area.

**State law requires a person who assumes custody of a dead body for final disposition to obtain a burial-transit permit.**

A burial-transit permit can be obtained from the Bureau of Vital Statistics under the Alaska Division of Public Health. Their website (see link below) also includes information on obtaining a death certificate. You can contact them at 907-465-3391 for more information. A funeral home may be able to apply for the burial-transit permit.

Website: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/VitalStats/Pages/btp.aspx>

### Private Property Burial Plot Recommendations

If burial on private property is allowed by local authorities in your area, these guidelines should be followed:

- Burial should be a minimum of 3.5 to 4 feet below the ground surface.
- Burial in a casket or vault is not required.
- Grave sites should not be located on a slope or other area where erosion could eventually expose the body.
- All grave sites should be a minimum of 200 feet from any stream, lake, or potable water supply.
- Grave sites should be recorded on the deed to the property.

### ***When is a Burial Transit Permit Needed?***

- *The final disposition (burial/cremation) of the body or fetus;*
- *Moving the body within Alaska;*
- *Shipping the body out of Alaska provided that all requirements as to embalming and casket or other container have been fulfilled;*
- *Storing or holding the body for a period beyond 72 hours after death;*
- *Transportation by common carrier;*
- *Holding a public funeral.*

**Note:** The Municipality of Anchorage has local ordinances prohibiting the burial of human remains except in an approved cemetery.