

# **New Cemetery Selection Criteria**

**Topology – ground level enough**

**Size – burial space available on site adequate.**

**Access – local roads, ease of putting access and gate in (ideally internal one-way system)**

**Groundwater protection – how well meets EA criteria**

**Location – can it be supported from existing depot / cemetery, likely level of opposition?**

## **Human and animal burials: minimum groundwater protection**

A burial site must be:

- outside a [source protection zone 1](#) (SPZ1)
- at least 250 metres from any well, borehole or spring supplying water for human consumption or used in food production – for example at farm dairies

- at least 30 metres from any spring or watercourse not used for human consumption or not used in food production
- at least 10 metres from any field drain, including dry ditches

Different rules apply for:

- [home burials of a person](#) or larger domestic [pet animal](#) – the minimum distance is 50 metres from any well, borehole or spring supplying water for human consumption or used in food production purposes, including [private water supplies](#)
- [home burials of domestic pets](#) – there are no minimum groundwater protection requirements
- mass emergency burials with a risk of disease carried by groundwater – the zone may extend to [source protection zone 2](#) (SPZ2)

All graves must:

- have at least 1 metre clearance between the base of the grave and the top of the water table – they should not have any standing water in them when dug
- not be dug in unaltered or unweathered bedrock
- not be dug in areas susceptible to groundwater flooding
- be deep enough so at least 1 metre of soil will cover the top of the coffin, body or animal carcass

Always allow for any potential rise in the water table, including seasonal variations and extreme rainfall.

The Environment Agency can take action if large numbers of burials, either as a single event or over a period of time, affect or could affect groundwater quality.

Burials can result in the discharge of [hazardous substances](#) and [non-hazardous pollutants](#) to groundwater. They are therefore covered by the requirements of the Groundwater Daughter Directive 2006/118/EC as implemented by the Environmental Permitting Regulations.