



The India Association Hong Kong

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Port Health Office
Department of Health
21/F, Wu Chung House
213 Queen's Road East
Hong Kong

23 April 2021
By Email and Post
trhealth@dh.gov.hk

Attn: Dr PY Fan

Dear Sirs

Cremation arrangements for people of the Hindu and Sikh faiths

I write in relation to important issues in relation to cremation arrangements that affect members of the Hindu and Sikh communities in Hong Kong.

By way of background, it is an important component of the Hindu and Sikh faiths that cremations should take place as quickly as possible after death. It is for this reason that special arrangements have been in place at Cape Collinson crematorium to allow for rapid access to crematorium facilities (usually within a day or two).

As you are aware, cremations are only possible if:

1. A Medical Certificate (Cremation) for the deceased has been issued by the related medical practitioner; or
2. the Coroner has ascertained the cause of death of the deceased and a Cremation Order has been issued.

An application for a cremation permit must thereafter be made at one of the two joint offices set up by the Immigration Department, Department of Health and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (at Wu Chung House in Wan Chai or Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices in Kowloon).

Unfortunately, whilst it is possible to get a death certificate on Sundays and public holidays, the joint offices issuing cremation permits are closed on public holidays. This can lead to a very long wait for a cremation spot after long spells of public holidays e.g. the recent Easter and Ching Ming holidays. To prevent such delays, we would be grateful if consideration could be given to arrangements whereby a cremation permit could be issued (and a booking of a cremation session made) on public holidays.

Another allied issue is that according to the Hindu and Sikh faiths, ashes once collected are usually never brought home but instead immediately disposed of at sea.

For this reason, it would be very much appreciated if arrangements could be made for applications for scattering of cremated human ashes in Hong Kong waters (FEHB 198) to be processed within 24 hours rather than the current 10 days.

Many thanks in advance for considering these important issues. We would be happy to make ourselves available for a meeting where we could explain our concerns in greater detail.

Yours faithfully



Vishal Melwani
President
The India Association Hong Kong