

Human Tissue Authority  
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[REDACTED]  
By email to [REDACTED]

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**Email** [enquiries@hta.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hta.gov.uk)  
**Date** 3 September 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Freedom of Information request**

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which was received by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) on 13 August 2018. Your email outlined the following request:

Could I have all relevant information/audits/data for why patients that stay over a 30 day period within a mortuary has to be frozen between the temperature -16 to -20.

### **Response**

The HTA's revised licensing standards for the PM sector came into force on 3 April 2017. The 'Post-mortem Examination Standards and Guidance' document provides guidance to assist licensed establishments to meet the HTA's licensing standards.

The HTA standards require licensed establishments to ensure that there are appropriate facilities and practices for storage of bodies and that these preserve the dignity of the deceased. The 'Post-mortem Examination Standards and Guidance' document (version 1, published 23/01/2016) includes the following guidance:

*Refrigeration of bodies should be at a temperature of approximately 4 degrees Celsius. The optimal operating temperature for freezer storage is around -20 Celsius, +/- 4 degrees.*

*There should be sufficient frozen storage for the long-term storage of bodies; the HTA advises that bodies should be moved into frozen storage after 30-days in refrigerated storage if there is no indication they are soon to be released or further*

*examined, or before, depending on the condition of the body. Where there is insufficient freezer storage to meet needs, there should be arrangements with other establishments, or other contingency steps, to ensure that bodies can be stored appropriately.*

*Bodies in long-term storage should be checked regularly; this should include confirmation of their identity and the reason for their continued storage.*

The licensing standards and guidance were developed in consultation with representatives from the PM sector, including the HTA's Histopathology Working Group. They were also subject to wider consultation with professionals working in the sector and the public.

### **Further information**

If you are unhappy with the way the HTA has handled your request for information in this case, you may in the first instance ask us for an internal review by writing to us at the above postal or email address.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have the right to appeal directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision, at the address below. There is no charge for making an appeal.

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45

Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

