Anatomy Unit of the University of Fribourg
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Information on Body Donation

This document provides additional information on body donation that is not, or only partially included in the **brochure** and the **testamentary disposition**.

Requirements

Body donation is only possible if the donor personally drafts and signs a **testamentary disposition** during their lifetime. The corresponding **form provided by the Anatomy Unit of Fribourg** must be used for this purpose. Only individuals who are at least 18 years old at the time of signing, and are fully capable of acting and making judgments, are eligible to make a testamentary disposition.

Reasons for Refusal

Even with a testamentary disposition, the Anatomy Unit of Fribourg may refuse to accept the body of a donor without giving reasons. Possible reasons for this may include:

- Exceeding the capacity of the Fribourg Anatomy Unit
- Residence or death abroad
- Contagious infectious diseases
- Severe overweight or underweight
- Delay in delivery of the body (more than 24 hours after death)
- Poor condition following an accident, illness, or surgery
- Organ donation
- Autopsy
- Suicide

If the Anatomy Department of Fribourg declines the body donation, the remains can be transferred to the **Swiss Institute for Forensic Human Taphonomy (SHIFT)** at the Centre Universitaire Romand de Médecine Légale (CURML) in Lausanne. There, the body can be used for a research project on biological funerary decomposition. This option must be explicitly agreed to in the testamentary disposition (by checking a box). If consent is given, the body donor's data will also be forwarded to the SHIFT team, who will then contact the donor and provide further information.

Anonymity & Pseudonymity

Donated bodies are always stored and processed in anonymized or pseudonymized (encrypted) form. This applies both to the use of the body and its parts in research and education, as well as to personal data (e.g., medical history, research findings, etc.). This protects and preserves the identity of the body donor.

Encryption or pseudonymization means that all identifying information (name, date of birth, etc.) is replaced by a key (code/pseudonym). Those who do not know the key cannot therefore draw any conclusions about the individual's identity. The key list is kept securely at all times in the Anatomy Unit of the University of Fribourg. All persons who have access to the data are strictly bound by confidentiality to ensure that it remains impossible for external parties to identify an individual body donor.

Anonymization means that all identifying information that could allow personal identification is completely deleted. Thus, no key list exists, and no one can draw any conclusions about the underlying individual.

Costs

Body donation to the Anatomy Department of Fribourg is **free of charge and without financial incentive**. This means that the costs for transporting the body from the place of death to the anatomy unit, for its conservation and processing, as well as for its cremation and burial of the ashes in a communal grave are covered by the anatomy unit. There is no fee payable by the body donor ("funeral fee"). Conversely, the Anatomy Unit of Fribourg does not pay any financial compensation to the body donor or their relatives.

Last Will

The testamentary disposition ("last will") is an agreement made **exclusively between the body donor and the Anatomy Unit of Fribourg**. Wishes or objections from relatives of the deceased are not legally binding and therefore irrelevant. The last will and testament can be revoked by the body donor at any time during their lifetime and without giving reasons.

Storage of the Body

Upon arrival at the Anatomy Unit in Fribourg, the body is first preserved by chemical fixation or deep freezing. Chemical fixation can take up to three years. Further processing of the body can take several more years. As a result, **two to five years** often pass between the time of death and cremation/burial. In principle, the storage of anatomical specimens derived from the body is **unlimited in time**.

Applicable Law and Jurisdiction:

This order is governed exclusively by Swiss law.
The exclusive place of jurisdiction is Fribourg, Switzerland.