

## NUMBER OF CREMATIONS UP IN NEW MEXICO

The rate of cremation as final disposition for deceased people has increased by 50 percent since 1990 in New Mexico. According to the New Mexico Department of Health's "Final Disposition of Persons Dying in New Mexico, 1980-1998," in 1998, 34.3 percent of deceased people were cremated; in 1990 that proportion was 22.4 percent and in 1980 it was 10.7 percent. When the total number of deaths are taken into consideration (12,804 in 1998 versus 8,987 in 1980), the number of cremations in New Mexico has risen more than four-fold in the past 19 years.

In 1998 52.2 percent of the deceased were buried, down from 62.4 percent in 1990 and down from 66.4 percent in 1980. Other methods of final disposition include donation (formerly called "research") and entombment, which accounted for 1.7 percent of final dispositions in New Mexico in 1998.

Of counties recording more than 200 deaths, Rio Arriba County had the highest percentage of burials at 77.3 percent; Sandoval County had the highest percentage of cremations at 47.2 percent; and Otero County had the highest percentage of removals at 30.1 percent. Of all counties, however, Roosevelt had the highest percentage of burials with 55 of 69 deceased being buried; Harding had the highest percentage of cremations, with three of four deceased being cremated; and Colfax had the highest percentage of removals with 50 of the 124 deceased being removed to another state.

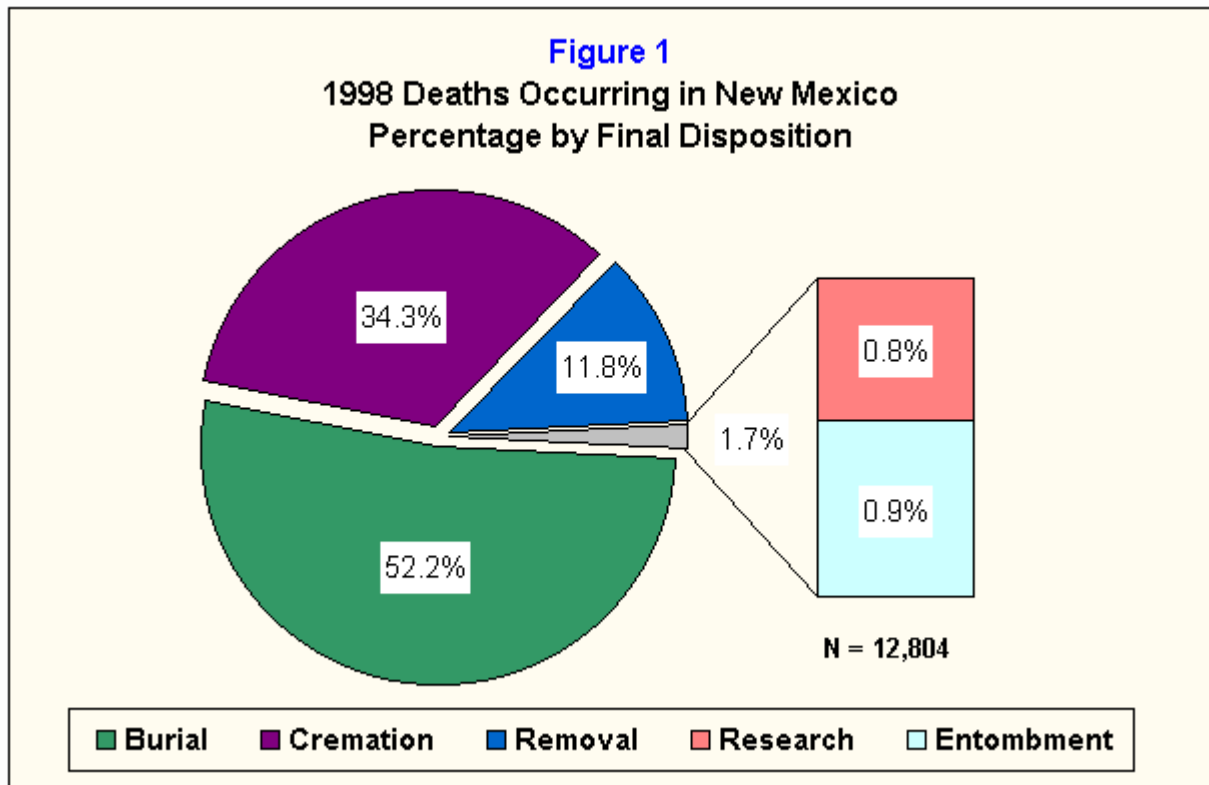
The Final Disposition Study is researched and written by New Mexico Vital Records and Health Statistics of the New Mexico Department of Health.

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### Final Disposition of Persons Dying in New Mexico, 1980-1998

In 1998, 12,804 deaths occurred in New Mexico; this was twenty-one percent more than the 10,572 deaths that occurred in the State in 1990, and forty-two percent more than the 8,987 deaths in 1980. For all deaths occurring in New Mexico, disposition of the body of the deceased was tabulated by the following categories: burial, cremation, removal (to an out-of-state location), donation (before 1989, called "research"), entombment, "other", and unknown. **Figure 1**, below, shows the proportion of 1998 deaths by manner of disposition. Burial accounted for a little over half of the final disposition of persons who died in New Mexico in 1998; cremations

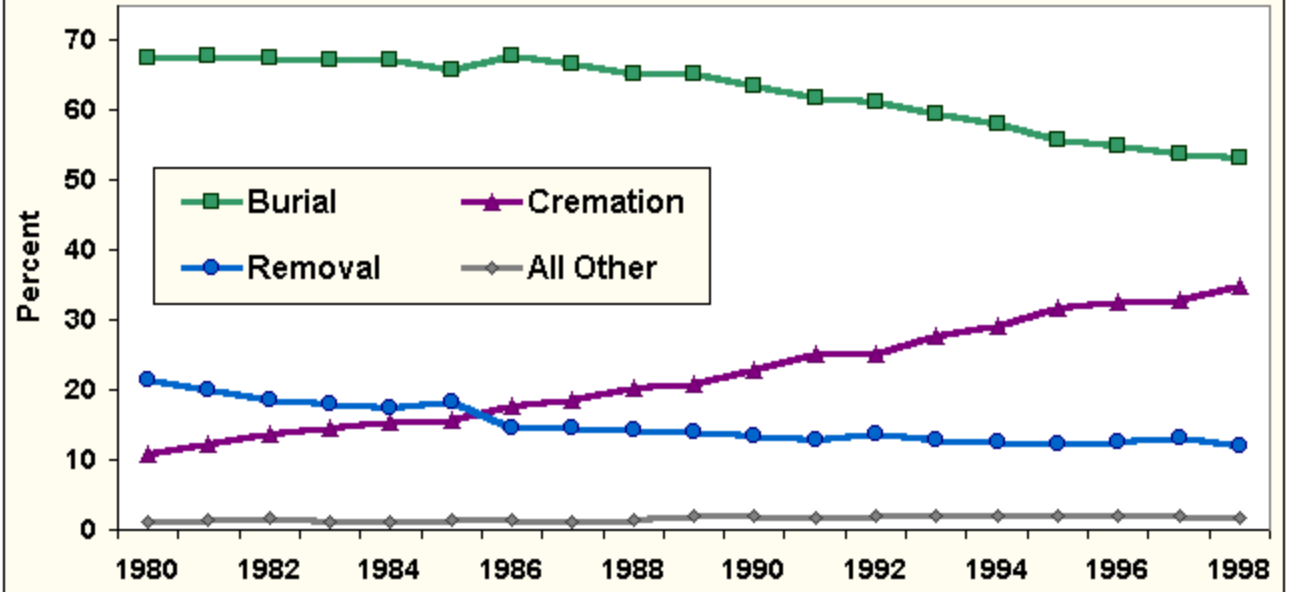
accounted for a little over a third, and removal about one out of every nine.



As shown on the following page in [Figure 2](#) and [Table 1](#), both the proportion and number of deaths by method of final disposition have changed over the years, while the total number of deaths occurring in New Mexico continues to increase over time. [Figure 1](#) (above) shows the dramatic rise in the proportion of final disposition of New Mexico deaths by cremation: the 1998 figure (34.3%) was one and one-half times more than in 1990 (22.4%) and over three times greater than in 1980 (10.7%). In contrast, final disposition by burial and removal account for increasingly lower proportions of New Mexico deaths: disposition by burial in 1998 (52.2% of deaths) was sixteen percent lower than in 1990 (62.4%) and twenty-two percent lower than in 1980 (66.4%); disposition by removal in 1998 (11.8%) was eleven percent lower than in 1990 (13.3%) and forty-five percent lower than in 1980 (21.3%). [Table 1](#) presents number of deaths occurring in New Mexico by method of final disposition; the number of cremations has increased more than four-fold over nineteen years.

Figure 2

Final Disposition of Persons Dying in New Mexico  
Percentage of All Deaths 1980 - 1998



**Table 1**  
**Final Disposition of Persons Dying in New Mexico 1980-1998**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Burial</b>	<b>Cremation</b>	<b>Removal</b>	<b>Donation/ Research*</b>	<b>Entomb- ment</b>	<b>Other/ Unspecified</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1980</b>	5,993	965	1,917	4	<i>na</i>	108	8,987
<b>1981</b>	5,748	1,039	1,696	-	<i>na</i>	130	8,613
<b>1982</b>	6,146	1,243	1,693	-	<i>na</i>	148	9,230
<b>1983</b>	6,085	1,311	1,643	3	<i>na</i>	111	9,153
<b>1984</b>	6,312	1,454	1,632	3	<i>na</i>	102	9,503
<b>1985</b>	6,328	1,504	1,761	21	<i>na</i>	119	9,733
<b>1986</b>	6,735	1,753	1,437	20	<i>na</i>	131	10,076
<b>1987</b>	6,873	1,917	1,512	22	<i>na</i>	96	10,420
<b>1988</b>	6,712	2,080	1,470	38	<i>na</i>	100	10,400
<b>1989</b>	6,710	2,146	1,434	62	137	4	10,493
<b>1990</b>	6,595	2,372	1,401	61	142	1	10,572
<b>1991</b>	6,787	2,763	1,421	61	131	4	11,167
<b>1992</b>	6,717	2,762	1,503	67	137	3	11,189
<b>1993</b>	6,827	3,167	1,470	56	168	5	11,693
<b>1994</b>	6,878	3,475	1,492	57	174	4	12,080
<b>1995</b>	6,822	3,877	1,515	68	177	1	12,460
<b>1996</b>	6,703	3,979	1,538	72	156	2	12,450
<b>1997</b>	6,684	4,097	1,615	78	156	7	12,637
<b>1998</b>	6,688	4,386	1,511	99	119	1	12,804

\* 1989 and later "Donation"; before 1989 "Research".

Table 2, below, shows the number and percent deaths by method of disposition and county of occurrence for New Mexico in 1998. Method of disposition varies widely by county. Of counties recording more than 200 deaths, Rio Arriba County had the highest percentage of burials, Sandoval County the highest percentage of cremations and Otero County the highest percentage of removals.

**Table 2**  
**FINAL DISPOSITION OF PERSONS DYING IN NEW MEXICO**  
**DURING 1998 BY COUNTY OF DEATH**

	<b>Burial</b>		<b>Cremation</b>		<b>Removal</b>		<b>All Other</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
NEW MEXICO	6,688	52.2%	4,386	34.3%	1,511	11.8%	219	1.7%	12,804
Bernalillo	2,306	45.2%	2,193	43.0%	462	9.1%	137	2.7%	5,098
Cibola	91	65.9%	34	24.6%	13	9.4%	-	--	138
McKinley	318	76.3%	33	7.9%	66	15.8%	-	--	417
Sandoval	107	40.1%	126	47.2%	18	6.7%	16	6.0%	267
San Juan	398	58.0%	107	15.6%	181	26.4%	-	--	686
Torrance	27	52.9%	12	23.5%	11	21.6%	1	2.0%	51
Valencia	101	49.5%	89	43.6%	10	4.9%	4	2.0%	204
Colfax	65	52.4%	8	6.5%	50	40.3%	1	0.8%	124
Harding	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	-	--	-	--	4
Los Alamos	30	38.0%	44	55.7%	2	2.5%	3	3.8%	79
Mora	15	71.4%	6	28.6%	-	--	-	--	21
Rio Arriba	177	77.3%	41	17.9%	10	4.4%	1	0.4%	229
San Miguel	163	67.9%	64	26.7%	13	5.4%	-	--	240
Santa Fe	374	45.9%	376	46.2%	47	5.8%	17	2.1%	814
Taos	95	57.6%	49	29.7%	18	10.9%	3	1.8%	165
Union	36	75.0%	-	--	12	25.0%	-	--	48
Catron	5	31.3%	9	56.3%	2	12.5%	-	--	16
Dofia Ana	452	46.0%	376	38.3%	146	14.9%	9	0.9%	983
Grant	171	56.3%	110	36.2%	22	7.2%	1	0.3%	304
Hidalgo	14	38.9%	10	27.8%	11	30.6%	1	2.8%	36
Luna	64	34.8%	98	53.3%	21	11.4%	1	0.5%	184
Otero	167	48.8%	69	20.2%	103	30.1%	3	0.9%	342
Sierra	77	42.1%	82	44.8%	17	9.3%	7	3.8%	183
Socorro	55	55.0%	35	35.0%	7	7.0%	3	3.0%	100
Chaves	338	61.1%	173	31.3%	41	7.4%	1	0.2%	553
Curry	227	69.8%	45	13.8%	48	14.8%	5	1.5%	325
De Baca	15	68.2%	6	27.3%	1	4.5%	-	--	22
Eddy	335	72.4%	85	18.4%	41	8.9%	2	0.4%	463
Guadalupe	26	55.3%	3	6.4%	18	38.3%	-	--	47
Lea	245	70.2%	48	13.8%	55	15.8%	1	0.3%	349
Lincoln	67	46.9%	39	27.3%	37	25.9%	-	--	143
Quay	71	71.0%	5	5.0%	22	22.0%	2	2.0%	100
Roosevelt	55	79.7%	8	11.6%	6	8.7%	-	--	69

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