

# What to Do When Someone Dies Abroad

It can be a challenging and emotional time when someone passes away, but it may seem even more distressing if they die abroad. Speak to your funeral director who is experienced in body repatriation.

This guide will advise you on what to do when someone dies abroad; whether you're at home and you find out that your loved one has died overseas, or if you're abroad with them when they pass away.

## If you're abroad together

If you're travelling or holidaying abroad with someone and they pass away, the first steps you need to take are:

- Contact the nearest British embassy (or High Commission/Consulate)
- If you're on an organised tour, let the organisers know what's happened
- If you're staying in a resort, let a representative know

Most holiday resorts and organisations have welfare representatives who can help you during this emotional time. You can also contact family at home and speak with them if you're at a loss of what to do.

If you're travelling abroad and staying at an Airbnb, or accommodation that isn't booked under an organisation, you may want to contact your family first. Then let the local police know, as they'll be able to help you get in touch with the nearest British embassy.

## If they're abroad and you're not

If a loved one dies abroad while you're at home in the UK, the British consulate is legally obligated to contact the next-of-kin. You may find out from the embassy itself, or the police force may be instructed to tell you.

If you find out through a package holiday representative, or tour operator for example, it's important to contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They'll keep you up to date with what's happening and can help you decide arrangements.

Finding out about a loved one's death when you're not with them is a confusing, difficult situation. There are steps you must take when this happens but remember you can always ask family or close friends to help you.

## Registering a death abroad

You must register your loved one's death in the country where they passed away.

If you're unsure about how to do this, your nearest British embassy will be able to help you. It's important to note that you must also register the death with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. If your loved one died while on a ship or plane, you must register the death in the country that the ship or plane is registered to and not where the ship or plane was in at the time of death. The British embassy can help you get hold of this information.

Learn more about registering a death abroad.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/death-and-wills/what-to-do-if-someone-dies-abroad/#:~:text=Funeral%20arrangements&text=Before%20you%20can%20bring%20the,a%20certificate%20of%20embalming>.

## How to bring the body home

Bringing a body home from abroad can be straightforward process. To bring your loved one home, follow these steps:

- Obtain an English translation of the Death Certificate
- Get permission to bring the body home – this is usually granted by a coroner in the country where your loved one passed away
- Inform a coroner at home if the death was sudden, violent or unnatural – an investigation will need to be conducted

When your loved one's body is returned home, you must take the Death Certificate translation to the register office, in the location where you'd like the funeral to be conducted.

## How to bring cremated remains home after an overseas funeral

If your loved one was cremated abroad, but you want to bring their ashes home, you'll need two documents:

- Death certificate
- Certificate of Cremation

This process will depend on the country's regulations. Find out more about transporting ashes overseas.

## How to bring a body back from abroad for a UK funeral

If a loved one dies abroad, most families will go through the process of bringing the body or ashes home for a funeral in the UK. This process is known as body repatriation.

Repatriation simply means returning the deceased to their country of origin. There are

instances where people prefer a burial abroad, which would mean repatriating the remains from the UK. Your local will be able to explain more about taking a body abroad for burial if this is something you wish to consider.

Here's a breakdown of how to begin the body repatriation process for your loved one:

- **Notify British authorities** - you will need to inform the nearest British embassy of your loved one's death before you can begin repatriating their body. Find out who to notify after a death.
- **Register the death** - do this at a register office where your loved one died. Then, you'll need to get the Death Certificate translated and liaise with the coroner. They'll be able to give you permission to repatriate the body.
- **Find out if the individual had repatriation insurance** - repatriating a body can be costly.

There are considerations such as embalming expenses and shipping costs, and the bureaucracy of the entire process. This is why it's important to check your loved one's insurance policy. Many travel insurance companies will include body repatriation as part of their policy, but dying abroad with no insurance could result in the next-of-kin having to pay fees.

Once you have all the relevant documentation and permissions granted, you'll be able to repatriate your loved one's body back home. Whether you're repatriating a body to or from the UK, our full repatriation service will help address your requirements and