

DEATH OF AN AMERICAN IN ENGLAND AND WALES

DEATH OVERSEAS: The Special Consular Services Unit (SCS) at the U.S. Embassy in London can assist family and friends in the event of the death of an American citizen in England and Wales. The SCS Unit can act as liaison in arranging the disposition of remains and help with forwarding personal effects. The family or legal representative must pay all funeral home charges, shipping costs for the remains and personal effects (if applicable). The SCS Unit will work with any funeral home selected by the family to ensure proper documentation for shipment of remains to the United States. We maintain a list of four funeral homes that are familiar with international shipping requirements.

Even if no assistance is needed in making funeral arrangements, the death of an American citizen, whether resident or tourist in the United Kingdom, should be reported to the SCS Unit so that a Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad can be issued. This document is necessary to settle legal and estate matters in the United States. The SCS Unit can issue up to 20 copies of the Report, which is usually sufficient in number to settle matters in the United States. For more information on this document, follow this link

http://london.usembassy.gov/cons_new/acs/scs/report_of_death_of_an_american_citizen_abroad.pdf).

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS: The following general information is provided to assist families in making initial decisions. Indicated costs are **estimates**, based on deaths with no unusual circumstances, and should be considered as guides only. These estimates also relate only to costs incurred in England and Wales (inclusive of shipping). U.S. funeral home costs would be handled separately.

A. Requirement for autopsy (post mortem) in the event of sudden death

Under British law, the coroner must order that an autopsy be conducted when there is reasonable cause to suspect that the deceased died from

- (a) violent or unnatural death; or
- (b) a sudden death of which the cause is unknown; or
- (c) in prison or in such place or in such circumstances as to require a coroner's inquest.

B. Outcomes from the autopsy

There are three possible outcomes of the coroner's autopsy examination:

- (a) The cause of the sudden death is determined to be natural – in which case the coroner's jurisdiction ceases and there is no requirement for further inquiry;
- (b) The cause of the sudden death is determined to be not natural (that is, evidence is found that the death was violent or unnatural), in which case the coroner must proceed to hold an inquest;

(c) A cause of death is not disclosed (not established), in which case the coroner must hold an inquest.

While the inquest may be held several months after death, the coroner usually will issue the necessary paperwork to allow funeral arrangements to proceed within a few days of the autopsy.

C. Maximum period before interment

British law does not place a time limit within which burial must take place. Remains can be held free of charge at a public mortuary pending receipt of next-of-kin's instructions.

D. Registration of death

Under British law, if the coroner is not investigating a death, then the death must be registered within five days. If the death cannot be registered within five days, the registrar must be informed as soon as possible. In coroner's cases, the death will be automatically registered by the authorities once the inquest has been held.

E. Embalming

There is neither a time limit within which remains must be embalmed, nor a requirement for embalming of remains for export from the United Kingdom or import into the United States.

Next-of-kin are encouraged to consult their receiving funeral home to resolve any doubts about embalming, particularly if relatives wish to view the remains. Next-of-kin should advise the funeral home or the SCS Unit if, for religious or other reasons, the body should not be embalmed.

In cases of HIV/AIDS, or other highly contagious diseases, embalming may not be possible, and should be discussed with the selected funeral home. If embalming does proceed, there may be additional costs for replacement of equipment.

F. Cremation

There is no time limit within which remains must be cremated.

G. Coffins

Coffins/caskets are available that are suitable for cremation, local burial, or international shipment of remains.

H. Exportation of remains from the United Kingdom

(1) Whole Remains: Whole remains must be contained in a zinc-lined, hermetically sealed coffin/casket. To facilitate the export of whole remains from the United Kingdom

to the United States, the Embassy prepares a Consular Mortuary Certificate, which provides flight details and consignee, and incorporates the following documents:

- (a) A certified copy of the local death certificate or the coroner's interim certificate when an inquest is pending;
- (b) An affidavit from the funeral director stating that the remains have been properly prepared and packed for shipment;
- (c) An embalming certificate, if appropriate; and
- (d) The coroner's "Out of England" certificate permitting the removal of the remains from the coroner's jurisdiction.

(2) Cremated Remains: Cremated remains may be exported if they are accompanied by a certified copy of the local death certificate, the cremation certificate, and a statement from the crematorium or the funeral home confirming the urn contains only the ashes of the deceased. We recommend that airline passengers carrying cremated remains to the United States declare the nature of the package to UK and U.S. customs. It is also advisable that the urn be wooden to allow security screening at the airport.

I. Cost estimates

Charges shown are based on an exchange rate of \$1.80 = 1 British pound sterling.

I) Local burial - \$7200

Fees include collection and transportation of remains, funeral home charges, administrative fees, cost of private burial plot near London, and a brief service with no mourners present. This can only be an approximate figure, as the cost of burial plots varies immensely and there are often different prices for borough residents and non-residents.

II) Cremation and local disposal of ashes - \$2880

Fees include collection and transportation of remains, doctor's certificates, crematorium fee, administrative fees, brief service with no mourners present, and scattering of ashes.

III) Cremation and air shipment of ashes - \$3420

As (II) above but also includes the collection of the ashes from the crematorium, packaging and forwarding to the consignee by air freight for collection from the airport.

IV) Preparation and shipment of whole remains (excluding airfreight costs) - \$2700

Preparation of remains for shipment, including local collection of remains, embalming, provision and preparation of a lightweight coffin in accordance with established U.S. and international standards for shipment, administration of flight arrangements, preparation of all documentation, notification of consignee and delivery to the airport. The U.S. funeral costs are not included in this estimate.

(V) Sample airfreight charges based on an average of 140 kilos

London to Atlanta	\$1320
London to Chicago	\$1310
London to Denver	\$1535
London to Grand Forks	\$1560
London to Houston	\$1405
London to Los Angeles	\$1550
London to Miami	\$1345
London to New York	\$1175
London to Oklahoma	\$1410
London to Phoenix	\$1540
London to San Francisco	\$1545
London to Seattle	\$1545

J. Exhumation

Applications for exhumation must be made to the British Home Office. Exhumed remains and their original casket/coffin must be contained in an outer casket/coffin for shipment. Exhumations may be carried out only before the opening of the cemetery to the public, i.e. normally at dawn, Monday to Friday. The cemetery charges a fee to open the grave. If the death occurred a long time ago or the deceased died of an infectious disease, the environmental health office would also be in attendance.

K. Remarks

The four funeral homes on the Embassy's list are all based in London. For deaths outside of London, an additional \$2.70 per mile is charged by the London companies to cover travel costs.

Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad

The consular “Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad” is a report that provides the essential facts concerning the death of a U.S. citizen and is based on the British death certificate or the Coroner’s Interim Certificate of the Fact of Death. It can generally be used in U.S. courts to help settle estate matters.

To enable the Embassy to prepare this document, next-of-kin or legal representatives should complete the “Request for Information for Preparation of Foreign Service Report of Death” and forward it to the SCS Unit along with the deceased’s U.S. passport and the British death certificate. The passport will be canceled and returned with the death certificate and up to 20 copies of the Report of Death.

If you have any questions regarding this procedure, please contact the Embassy at 020-7499-9000.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES
24 GROSVENOR SQUARE
LONDON W1A 2LQ**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR PREPARATION OF
FOREIGN SERVICE REPORT OF DEATH**

Please provide the following information about the deceased and return the form to the above address together with the death certificate and the deceased's U.S. passport or naturalization certificate, or other proof of American citizenship. Please write clearly.

PERSONAL DATA

FULL NAME: _____

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

DATE OF DEATH: _____

PLACE OF DEATH: _____

LAST U.S. ADDRESS: _____

LAST UK ADDRESS: _____

NEXT OF KIN: Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____

Address: _____

TRAVELING OR RESIDING WITH RELATIVES OR FRIENDS AS FOLLOWS:

Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____

Address: _____

(please turn over)

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS:

BURIAL: Name & address of cemetery: _____

Grave number: _____

Date of burial: _____

CREMATION: Name & address of crematorium: _____

When & where ashes scattered, interred or held: _____

Date of cremation: _____

EFFECTS (property of the deceased):

CURRENT LOCATION OF EFFECTS: _____

PERSON OR OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR CUSTODY & ACCOUNTING OF EFFECTS:

Name: _____

Address: _____

If the deceased received regular payments from any of the following, please give the claim number and the amount received:

Social Security: _____

Veterans Administration: _____

Civil Service: _____

Railroad Board: _____

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.

Signature: _____

Name (printed) _____

Relationship to deceased: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Funeral Directors

Edmund & Sons
179-185 Stockwell Road
London SW9 9SJ
Phone: 011-44-20-7978-8154
Fax: 011-44-20-978-8156

F.A. Albin & Sons
52 Culling Road
London SE16 2TN
Phone: 011-44-20-8857-0330
Fax: 011-44-20-8857-3004

Kenyon Christopher Henley
83 Westbourne Grove
London W2 4UL
Phone: 011-44-20-7313-6920
Fax: 011-44-20-7313-6999

Rowland Brothers International
299-305 Whitehorse Road
Croydon CR0 2HR
Phone: 011-44-20-8684-1667
Fax: 011-44-20-8684-0355