

What Do I Do When Death Occurs Internationally? Part 1

John A. Gentleman Mortuaries and Crematory in Omaha, NE

Regardless of the specific circumstances, a death overseas can lead to some significant complications in preparing and shipping a body internationally.

What paperwork is needed?

One of the most difficult parts of the process is getting the paperwork together as countries have different requirements for the paperwork needed. The first thing to do is to contact the US consulate in the country of death to ask which documents will be required and seek guidance.

Typically, you will need:

1. the death certificate,
2. burial/transit papers,
3. the deceased's passport,
4. and a letter from the funeral home assuring that only human remains are in the casket. This letter should be on funeral home letterhead.



Notes from the coroner or medical examiner ensuring no contagious disease is present will also help.

How much does it cost?

International ship out fees can vary between \$3,000 - \$4,000. There will likely also be an international mortuary cargo fee, which varies between \$2,000 - \$6,000.

A way to reduce this cost is to have the body cremated and then transport the cremated remains. However, should you choose to ship the body, note that only certain airlines provide this type of transport, and in many cases special burial containers or vaults are also required.

Above all, ensure that you are working with funeral professionals in both countries to help ensure a smooth, expedited delivery of your loved one's body.

Who do I call to help transport my loved one overseas?

International funeral shipping providers exist to help families in this specific situation. They are professionals whose sole job is to help families get their deceased loved ones back to the nation where funeral services are planned. International funeral shipping providers will make all the shipping arrangements for you. They will collect the deceased from the place of death and move them to a funeral facility. They will also make sure all your paperwork is in order and correct, that the deceased's body is properly prepared for transport, and they also help families navigate all the bureaucracy.

If you have any questions, contact your funeral director who will be able to answer questions or help point you towards some helpful resources to guide you through the process.