

# What Do I Do When Death Occurs Internationally? Part 2

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**When a death occurs overseas, it can be a complicated process to return your loved one home for a funeral, cremation or burial. Fortunately, there are many professionals who help families handle this very situation. Here are some important things to know about the process.**

## **How do I choose a funeral home back home?**

If you plan for a funeral and/or burial in the US, then you can typically use your funeral home of choice. However, you will want to choose a funeral home that has experience handling the transporting of human remains. Most funeral homes will be able to work with families in this situation, but you should always call and ask first. Know that once you start the process with returning your loved one's body, the shipping company will likely work directly with the funeral home and not the family to make things easier for you.



## **How long does it take to arrange for transport overseas?**

It typically takes about 5 days if there are not any complications with the paperwork. However, cargo transportation works differently than regular air travel. Space must be booked by weight and size. And there is typically a limit on how many deceased individuals may fly on a plane. It is best to not make assumptions about the time involved and know that everyone is working behind the scenes to make sure your loved one returns as quickly as possible.

## **When should I start making funeral arrangements?**

Since there are many unknowns in the process it is often best to wait until your loved one is safely at the receiving funeral home before making plans. While everyone will work to make sure things go as smoothly as possible, complications can arise which can delay their return.

## **Can I fly home with my loved one?**

You are always welcome to accompany your loved one on the final flight. Since human remains are shipped on regular passenger flights this is certainly a possibility if there is room.

It is important to remember, however, that there can be delays in the process. Flights may be delayed or canceled. Or your loved one may reach a location and the paperwork may not be correct. There are typically many layovers with international cargo flights and they may also have longer than normal layover times.

If you are planning on traveling with your loved one you will want to prepare yourself for these types of delays and know that there is a possibility of challenges arising. For many, this may be too much at an already difficult time of grief and it may be better to take a different flight, knowing your loved one will be well taken care of by all involved.

If you have any questions, you can ask your funeral director who can either answer your questions or help point you toward the appropriate resources.