

# *When Death Occurs Overseas*

Life can be unpredictable, and you will never know what is coming next. In the event of death outside Singapore, engaging a reliable Funeral Director ensures that your loved ones is taken care with upmost respect and care.

## **What to do if a family member or friend dies overseas?**

1. Contact **Peace Casket** for assistance at **+65 63964555 (24-hours hotline)** or **Mr Peter Yan +65 81250001** for advice
2. Obtain a **Death Certificate** by registering with the relevant foreign authorities.  
(An English translation is required if the death certificate is in foreign languages)
3. Contact the nearest **Singapore Overseas Mission** or **MFA Duty Office** at **+65 6379 8800** who can assist in registering the death abroad and notify the next-of-kin.

## **MFA Consular Officers can assist in:**

- Notify the next-of-kin (NOK) of the incident;
- Provide a list of local undertakers;
- Advice on the cost of local burial/cremation and transportation of remains and personal belongings of the deceased to Singapore;
- Remit money from family members, relatives or friends in Singapore to pay for any costs incurred, if necessary.

## **What MFA Consular Officers cannot do:**

- Investigate the cause of death;
- Make insurance claim on behalf of the family of the deceased;
- Provide legal advice;
- Pay for burial or cremation expenses;
- Pay for the return of the remains to Singapore;
- Pay for any outstanding bills or debts. In the absence of suitable medical/ travel insurance, the NOK or friends of the deceased are expected to cover these expenses.

## A. Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

### For Cremation or Burial

The body of a Singapore Citizen or Permanent Resident may be brought back to Singapore for cremation or burial. A Coffin Permit (Import) is required to bring the body into Singapore. A funeral director can assist with the procedures. The next-of-kin is required to give a Letter of Authorisation for the funeral director to apply for the Coffin Permit (Import) and Permit to Cremate/Bury.

### Application for Coffin (Import) Permit

a) You may apply for a coffin permit at any time from the following offices:

Port Health Office 4545 Jalan Bukit Merah Singapore 159466 Tel: 6222 2585 Fax: 6222 8543	Airport Health Office Singapore Changi Airport Tel: 6543 2515 Fax: 6543 1973
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b) Documents required for the issuance of the coffin permit:

1. [Death Certificate](#) issued by the country where death occurred (an English translation is required if the death certificate is in ethnic languages), [Cause of Death Certificate](#) or a [Statutory Declaration](#)
2. [Sealing Certificate](#) for the coffin
3. [Embalming Certificate](#), where applicable
4. [Coffin Export Permit](#) from the country exporting the body
5. [Air Waybill](#) (Air Consignment Note) if by air

## Death Registration

Death must also be reported to **Singapore's Registry of Births and Deaths**, Citizen Centre, 3rd Storey, ICA Building, personally by the next-of-kin of the deceased. If the next-of-kin is unable to report the death personally at the ICA building, a Letter of Authorisation will be required.

Documents required:

1. [Death Certificate issued by the foreign authorities](#) (an English translation is required if the death certificate is in ethnic languages)
2. [Coffin \(Import/Export\) permit](#)
3. [Permit to Bury/Cremate](#)
4. [Deceased's Singapore identity card, passport, Citizenship Certificate](#) (if any), and
5. [Informant's identification document](#)

## **Cremating Overseas**

If it is decided to cremate the deceased overseas, the following documents are required in order to bring the ashes back to Singapore:

### **a. Death Certificate**

The death certificate should indicate the following:

- Deceased's name (Ensure that the name is in ENGLISH as indicated in the passport);
- Nationality
- Passport number
- Date of death
- Cause of death

### **b. Cremation Certificate**

The ashes should be placed in a covered container and accompanied by the Death Certificate and Cremation Certificate of the deceased. There is no requirement for a permit to bring ashes into Singapore. However, Next-of-Kin should check with the relevant airline if it allows ashes to be hand-carried onboard the plane.

### **Choosing an Urn**

Size of urn must fit within the niche. Mandai Crematorium & Columbarium niche dimensions are 23.5cm(width) x 21cm(height) x 25cm(depth).

## **Other Relevant Information**

### **a) Infectious Diseases**

If the deceased died from an infectious disease such as HIV, it is essential to inform the authorities in both overseas and NEA Singapore so that the necessary precautions can be taken. The body of such person may be allowed into Singapore.

However, the following guidelines for the importation and cremation/burial of the body must be adhered to:

- a. Only approved undertakers can handle the body of a deceased who suffered from an infectious condition. The undertakers are to follow strictly the general precautionary measures.
- b. Double-bag the body in heavy duty plastic body bags before placing it in a sealed coffin.
- c. Hermetically seal the coffin at the joints with silicone.
- d. The lid of the coffin is not to be opened at any time.

### **b) Pacemaker**

If the deceased has any pacemaker or similar device in the body, do inform the funeral director.

## **B. Foreign National**

### **Letter of Authorisation for Funeral Director.**

Engage the services of a Funeral Director to assist with the procedures. The next-of-kin is required to give a Letter of Authorisation to them to apply the necessary permits.

### **For Cremation**

- The body of a foreigner may be imported into Singapore for cremation. A Coffin Permit (Import) is required to bring a body into Singapore.
- A Permit to Cremate will be issued together with the Coffin Permit (Import).
- Foreigners cremated in Singapore can only purchase niches at private columbaria.

### **For Burial**

- The bodies of foreigners can be imported into Singapore for burial ONLY IF the immediate next-of-kin is a Singapore Citizen or Permanent Resident. Due to limited burial ground, the bodies of foreign nationals may not be imported into Singapore for burial.
- A Coffin Permit (Import) is required to import a body into Singapore.
- A Permit to Bury will be issued together with the Coffin Permit (Import)