

**Date: 11/30/2020**

## **Death Overseas**

The Consular Section's American Citizen Services (ACS) unit can assist family and friends in the event of the death of a U.S. citizen in Bolivia by:

- Acting as a liaison in arranging the disposition of remains and forwarding personal effects.
- Providing a list of local funeral homes that are familiar with the international shipping requirements of human remains.
- Working with the funeral home selected by the family to ensure proper documentation for shipment of remains to the United States.

Note that the family or legal representative must pay all funeral home charges, shipping costs of the remains and personal effects (if applicable).

Even if no assistance is needed in making funeral arrangements, the death of a U.S. citizen, whether resident or tourist, should be reported to the ACS unit so that a Consular Report of Death of a U.S. Citizen Abroad can be issued. This document is necessary to settle legal and estate matters in the United States. The ACS unit issues several copies of the report to the family to settle matters in the United States.

## **Disposition of Remains**

The following information is provided to assist families in their initial decisions. Indicated costs are general estimates based on deaths not involving unusual circumstances.

### **Maximum Period Before Burial**

Bolivian law does not place a time limit during which burial must take place. However, funeral homes generally only allow one week to receive the next-of-kin's instructions due to limitations on refrigerated facilities. If additional time is needed to make subsequent final disposition of remains arrangements, the body must be transported to a refrigerated storage facility. Un-embalmed remains are usually buried within 48 hours after death.

### **Embalming**

Embalming is carried out by local funeral homes in accordance with local practices. In most cases, the services fall short of those expected in the United States.

### **Cremation**

Cremation is permitted in Bolivia. There is no time limit within which remains must be cremated. Remains can be cremated in major cities of Bolivia: La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Tarija, Oruro and Sucre. Cremation procedures result in the same sized fine ash as it does in the United States.

### **Caskets and Containers**

Local caskets and containers are available and are suitable for local burial or international shipment of remains. When human remains are to be transported out of the country, they are placed in a wooden coffin which is placed in a hermetically sealed metal coffin. The metal coffin is then placed in a wooden shipping container for shipment by air.

## **Exportation of Remains**

### ***Whole Remains:***

The undertaker at the chosen funeral home is responsible for meeting local requirements for exportation of human remains as follows:

- Embalming the remains;
- Placement of the remains in appropriate caskets and containers, following international standards and regulations;
- An official Bolivian Death Certificate - issued by the local Bolivian Civil Registry;
- Permit from the city (municipalidad) to export remains;
- Certificate of Embalming - issued by the funeral home;
- A Consular Mortuary Certificate - issued by the Consular Section;
- Statement from the funeral home confirming that the casket contains only the body of the deceased and the necessary clothing and packing.

### ***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 Bolivian and U.S. customs. It is also advisable that the urn be wooden to allow security screening at the airport.

### **Costs (all the amounts listed are approximate costs)**

Cost for mortuary services and funerals in Bolivia are comparatively lower than the equivalent services in the United States.

Local Burial Without Embalming	\$1,500
Local Burial With Embalming	\$2,000
Local Cremation	\$2,500
Preparation of Remains for Repatriation to the U.S.	\$4,000
Cremation and Repatriation of Ashes to the U.S. (Miami)	\$3,500

Air Freight from Other Cities to La Paz, Cochabamba or Santa Cruz

Additional transportation expenses may be incurred for deaths outside of La Paz, Cochabamba or Santa Cruz. Air freight from other cities to La Paz, Cochabamba or Santa Cruz is approximately \$400.

#### International Air Freight

Average weight of casket and containers required for export is 220 Kg. An approximate price for air shipment from La Paz to Miami is \$2,500.

#### **Exhumation and Shipment.**

Remains may be exhumed after five years with an authorization from local authorities. Costs involved with exhumation will include the opening of the grave, funeral home costs for removing the exhumed remains from the cemetery, and the costs of transporting the remains to the U.S.

#### **Autopsies**

Under Bolivian law autopsies are ordered by the Policía Técnica Judicial (PTJ). The PTJ will order an autopsy be conducted when there is a reason to suspect that death was violent or unnatural, a sudden death of which the cause is unknown, or a death which occurred under circumstances that require further investigation.

#### **Remarks**

Local practices regarding funerals, disposition of remains, mourning and memorial services are similar to practices in the U.S.