

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS REPORT
U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL, AUCKLAND

PART I – Name of Country

New Zealand

PART II - Consulate Information

Covering the Consular district of New Zealand, Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa

Address: U.S. Consulate General
Level 3, Citibank Centre
23 Customs Street East
Auckland 1010
New Zealand

[United States Embassy New Zealand Website](#)

Phone: + 64 9 303 2724

Email: AucklandACS@state.gov

[State Department Travel Information for New Zealand](#)

PART III - Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available

A variety of religions are freely practiced in New Zealand. According to the 2018 Census, Christianity is practiced by 37% of the population while Hindu (2.6%) and Islam/Muslim (1.3%) are the next most practiced religions.

PART IV - Funeral Directors and Related Services Available in New Zealand

Please see: <https://www.fdanz.co.nz/planning-a-funeral/find-a-funeral-director/>

***DISCLAIMER:** The U.S. Consulate General, Auckland, assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors:*

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NORTH ISLAND

Auckland:

Davis Funeral Services

Multiple locations

Web: www.davisfunerals.co.nz

Morrison Funeral Directors

Multiple locations

Web: www.morrison.co.nz

Sibuns Funeral Directors

Meadowbank

Web: www.sibuns.co.nz

Just Funerals

Penrose

Web: www.justfunerals.co.nz

Hamilton:

Pellows Funeral Directors

Hamilton

Web: www.pellowsfunerals.co.nz

Harbour City Funeral Home

Multiple locations

Web: www.harbourcityfunerals.co.nz

SOUTH ISLAND

Nelson:

Simplicity Funerals:

Nelson

Web: www.simplicity.co.nz

Christchurch:

Lamb & Hayward

Multiple locations

Web: www.lambandhayward.co.nz

Bell, Lamb and Trotter

Christchurch

Web: www.belllambtrotter.co.nz

Rotorua:

Mountain View Funeral Services

Rotorua

Web: www.mvfs.co.nz

Tauranga:

Elliotts Funeral Services

Multiple locations

Web: www.elliottsfunerals.co.nz

New Plymouth:

Vospers Funeral Directors

New Plymouth

Web: www.vospers.co.nz

Wellington:

Lychgate Funerals

Multiple locations

Web: www.lychgate.co.nz

Dunedin:

Gillions Funeral Services

Dunedin

Web: www.gillions.co.nz

Hope and Sons

Dunedin

Web: www.hopeandsons.co.nz

Queenstown:

Southern Lakes Funerals

Queenstown

Email: southernlakesfunerals@xtra.co.nz

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PART V - Profile of services available in New Zealand regarding preparation and shipment of remains:

Funeral directors assist with every aspect of the process and will prepare remains for cremation/interment in New Zealand, or repatriation to the United States. Adequate services are available to refrigerate, house, handle, embalm, transport, and process human remains.

1. Maximum Period of Retention of Bodies Prior to Burial

Neither local nor national law places a time limit on burial, whether the remains are embalmed. Experience has shown that if bodies have been retained for more than 6 months the authorities will proceed to dispose of remains through a destitute burial.

Cook Islands: There is no general requirement for burial within a specific time, although holding facilities are limited. If death occurs by other than natural causes, burial can be delayed until an autopsy is carried out. If death occurs on the Island of Rarotonga, remains can be stored at Cook Islands Funeral Services who charge a daily fee for use of the refrigerated storage area.

Niue: In Niue remains must be disposed of within twenty-four hours. In the case of a communicable disease, burial must take place within twelve hours.

2. Embalming

Embalming is essential if the body is to be entombed above ground or transported overseas. New Zealand facilities have licensed staff to provide embalming services. They also allow for embalming in cases where the death was due to HIV and Hepatitis C. Embalming is typically required for exporting deceased remains to the U.S.

Cook Islands: Facilities exist for embalming on the Island of Rarotonga

Niue: No embalming facilities are available

3. Cremation

Cremation services are readily available in New Zealand. The cremation process may commence after the appropriate documentation has been issued by the local medical authorities regarding the cause and nature of death.

4. Caskets and Containers

Export-quality caskets and containers available locally meet the requirements for shipment to the United States, including being hermetically sealed. Local funeral directors provide a variety of caskets and cost depends on the materials and construction of the casket.

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5. Export of Remains

Except as noted, procedures and documents for the exportation of human remains are shipping company or U.S. Government requirements:

Embalmed Remains:

1. Death Certificate from New Zealand's [Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages](#);
2. Embalming certificate issued by the undertaker/funeral director;
3. Health certificate stating that the remains have no quarantinable diseases, issued by the Department of Health;
4. Infectious disease certificate issued by New Zealand's Department of Health;
5. Affidavit by undertaker attesting to contents and embalming and that the casket is hermetically sealed against the escape of microorganisms; and
6. Consular Mortuary Certificate issued by a United States Consular Officer.

Cremated remains:

1. Death Certificate from New Zealand's [Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages](#);
2. Cremation certificate*; and
3. Certificate from the crematory* stating that the container holds only the cremated remains of the deceased.

* (The information requested in items 2 and 3 are often included on a single certificate).

6. Costs

Costs have been converted to U.S. dollars from the cost in local currency at the consular rate of exchange of US\$1.00 = NZ\$1.5, which prevailed on December 4, 2020.

All expenses associated with the burial and repatriation processes must be paid in advance. Fees may vary depending on the services provided. Cost of burial and repatriation of the remains of a deceased will vary depending on where the death occurred. The following fee schedule includes cost estimates. Additional charges apply if the deceased must be transported to Auckland for local burial or repatriation to the U.S.

SERVICE		
	NZD	USD
CREMATION/INTERMENT IN NEW ZEALAND		
Cremation with funeral service	10,000	6,666
Cremation without funeral service	5,000	3,333
Interment with funeral service and embalming	12,000	8,000
Interment without funeral service or embalming	8,200	5,466
Repatriating deceased U.S. citizens to the U.S. with funeral service	17,000	11,333
Repatriating deceased U.S. citizens to the U.S. without funeral service	12,000	8,000
Consular Fee for U.S. citizens	No Fee	No Fee
Consular fees (for non-U.S. Citizens)	75.00	50.00

Destitution and funeral costs: In cases of destitution where neither the deceased person's estate nor family members are able to pay funeral costs, the state authority may be able to assist with a state funded funeral.

Air Freight

Remains: FedEx and DHL will not transport human remains in any form. Freight charges imposed by local cargo companies vary depending on the weight and dimensions of the item. The following shipping charges are estimates based on average weight of an export type casket with human remains averaging 330lbs (150Kgs). Costs for air freight transport from Auckland to various points in the United States are listed below and must be added to the cost of funeral and export preparation processes:

AUCKLAND TO:	TOTAL NZD	TOTAL USD
California	4530	3020

Cremated Remains:

Human ashes are not permitted to be mailed through New Zealand Post to the United States from New Zealand and must be sent by International Air Mail with extra cover. The usual delivery time is 3 - 10 working days, costing approximately NZ\$800/US\$533. Ashes must be in a zinc lined urn with suitable cushioning, strong packaging and a customs declaration form stating the contents of the container must be affixed to the package. A copy of the cremation certificate and death certificate is required.

Surface (Sea) Mail: is not recommended for various reasons.

7. Exhumation

Exhumation is the removal of deceased remains from a vault or grave for reasons other than re-burial. An exhumation can be approved by the Ministry of Health for the purposes of forensic or criminal investigation or an application to exhume remains may be submitted to the local government authorities. For more information contact the Ministry of Health at info@health.govt.nz.

Applicants are responsible for paying all the fees associated with exhumation. Exhumation costs start at NZ\$8000/US\$5333

8. Post mortem Examinations

A post-mortem examination or autopsy is an inspection of the body carried out by a pathologist in order to establish a person's cause of death. Where a death is reported to the Coroner, the necessity for a post mortem and its extensiveness is determined by the Coroner. Where a Coroner directs a post mortem, family members have the right to object in some cases. There is no cost to the family if a post mortem is carried out. Once the post mortem is completed to the Coroner's satisfaction, the Coroner will release the body to the family.

Members of the immediate family are entitled to a copy of the post mortem report once it becomes available.

Further information regarding post mortem examinations is available at <https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/home-2/>

8. Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services

New Zealand is home to a diverse religious population with varying funeral, and mourning practices and local places of worship should be consulted when preparing services. New Zealand funeral homes typically provide services for wakes, funeral/memorial ceremonies, cremation and/or interment of deceased persons. Relatives and friends of the deceased are usually welcome to attend each part of the service.

9. Remarks

There are some cases when a death may be registered with the Registrar prior to establishing cause of death. When this occurs, the Coroner may be contacted to ascertain when the cause of death will be registered so that a complete death certificate may be obtained.

Death certificates may be requested from Internal Affairs [Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages](#).

COVID-19:

CDC requirements for importing human remains depend upon if the body has been embalmed, cremated, or if the person died from a [quarantinable communicable disease](#).

At this time, COVID-19 is a quarantinable, communicable disease in the United States and the remains must meet the standards for importation found in 42 Code of Federal Regulations Part 71.55 and may be cleared, released, and authorized for entry into the United States only under the following conditions.

- The remains are cremated; OR
- The remains are properly embalmed and placed in a hermetically sealed casket; OR
- The remains are accompanied by a permit issued by the CDC Director. The CDC permit (if applicable) must accompany the human remains at all times during the shipment. Permits for the importation of remains of a person known or suspected to have died from a quarantinable, communicable disease may be obtained through the CDC Division of Global Migration and Quarantine by calling the CDC Emergency Operations Center at +1 770 488 7100 or emailing dgmqpolicyoffice@cdc.gov.

Please see [CDC's guidance](#) for additional information.

