

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
JERUSALEM

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**DISPOSITION OF REMAINS**

***DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Consulate General assumes no responsibility for accuracy or currency of the information on non-U.S. Government sites included in this list.***

Maximum Period before Burial:

1. When the remains are embalmed: Embalming is not the usual practice in Israel, Jerusalem, the West Bank, or Gaza. Hence, local laws do not require domestic burial of an embalmed body within a specified time.
2. When the remains are not embalmed: Israeli law requires the disposition of remains within 48 hours unless the remains are to be shipped outside the country, in which case the body must be embalmed by law. Palestinian law does not have a time specific requirement for disposition of remains in routine circumstances; however, it is recommended to inter the remains as soon as possible

A. Embalming:

Although embalming is not the usual practice in Jerusalem, the West Bank or Gaza, there are facilities available nearby in Israel that can do such work. The health authorities require that embalming begin within 48 hours after death or that the body is kept under refrigeration. Approximate costs of embalming and shipment of remains are \$3500 to \$4500.

Embalming and/or refrigeration facilities are available with the following facilities/companies:

**The Institute of Forensic Medicine**

[Embalming, refrigeration; affiliated by the Israeli Ministry of Health]

Director: Dr. Chen Kogel

67 Ben Zvi Road

6810414 Tel Aviv - Jaffa

Israel

PO Box 49015, 61490 Tel Aviv, Israel

Tel. 972-3-512-7878; fax: 972-3-683-3813.

**Menucha Laad Burial Company**

[Embalming, refrigeration & shipment of remains]

Director: Mr. Yeshayahu Kariv

2 Yegia Kapayim Street

6777886 Tel Aviv

Israel

Tel: 972-3-687-2929; cellular 972-50-777-8804

**Noam Embalming Service**

[Embalming, refrigeration & shipment of remains]

Director: Mr. Benny Noam

23 Moshe Dayan St

5229445 Ramat Gan

Israel

Tel. 972-3-574-3330/9; fax: 972-3-574-8814; cellular: 057-770-8532. Note: website is mostly in Hebrew.

**B. Cremation**

There are no facilities in Jerusalem or the West Bank for cremation. *In Green-line Israel*, however, [Aley Shalechet Funeral Home](#) may be contacted regarding the possibility of **Cremation**: (Autumn Leaves), tel. 1-800-333-188. **Note**: although Jewish law bans the practice, there is no (Knesset or civil) law which specifically forbids cremation in Israel.

### C. Caskets and Containers

In the event that remains are to be transported to the United States, containers meeting all U.S. and Israeli shipping requirements can be obtained locally upon special order usually within 48 hours from these companies. Under Israeli law a body must be embalmed before it can be shipped out of the country.

- Should local Christian Orthodox or Armenian burial be desired, coffins can be obtained in Jerusalem by special order from:  
Mr. Samir Ghanem  
Jerusalem, Old City  
Tel. 972-2-627-2684  
Cellular phone 972-54-309-6536
  
- For local Christian Latin burial, coffins can be obtained by special order from:  
Mr. Emad Abu Ali  
Jerusalem, Old city,  
Cellular phone 972-52-287-1045

### D. Exportation of Remains:

Whenever remains are to be transported outside of Jerusalem, the West Bank, or Gaza via Ben Gurion Airport, the Consular section of the American Embassy in Tel Aviv assumes responsibility for the shipping of remains. The Consular section in Tel Aviv can be contacted by telephone at 972-3-519-7575 (519-7551 after hours) or by writing to:

U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv  
American Citizen Services  
71 Hayarkon Street  
6343229 Tel Aviv, Israel  
E-mail address: [amctelaviv@state.gov](mailto:amctelaviv@state.gov)

1. Remains: Israeli documentary requirements regarding exportation of remains are as follows:

- a. Death certificate issued by the Israeli Ministry of Interior;
- b. Statement from the embalmer;
- c. Transit permit issued by the Israeli Ministry of Health stating that there is no objection to the export of body from Israel.

The Ministry of Interior requires that the coffin be prepared and sealed in accordance with Public Health (re-interment) Rules of 1941.

Ashes: There are no facilities for cremation available in Jerusalem or the West Bank. In Green-Line Israel, contact “[Aley Shalechet](#)” ([Autumn Leaves](#)): tel. 1-800-333-188.

#### F. Costs – Local Burial

1. Jewish Burial: Since October 1, 1976, [The Israeli National Insurance Institute](#) (see also [ITIM - The Right to Live Jewish](#)) covers the cost of the funeral for persons of the Jewish faith, which includes the preparation of the body, burial ceremony and burial plot. If the family wishes to choose a particular plot, however, the family must pay all expenses.

Private burial by the Jewish Burial Society which includes plot, gravesite preparation and funeral expenses, costs between \$5000 to \$20,000 depending on plot location. Contact the Jewish Burial Society, “Kehilat Yerushalayim” at 972-72-325-8716/972-2-625-2281. Mailing address: 1 Eliashar St., POB 562, 91004 Jerusalem. Office hours: Sunday to Thursday 8am to 3pm, and Friday 8am to 12noon.

Private burial in Givat Shaul (or “Har Hamenuchoth”) Cemetery by the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI, see specifically their [Cemetery & Bereavement Program](#))

Include plot, grave digging and prayer services. The costs are:

Resident: \$4000.00\* if purchased in life.

Non-Resident: \$8250.00\*.

At the AACI official cemetery, Eretz Hachaim in Beit Shemesh (about 30 minutes’ drive from Jerusalem), Israel, the cost is \$6500\* via AACI,

regular cost \$6700\*. There is also an approximate \$100.00\* membership fee.

**\*Note:** for up-to-date costs and guidance, please contact Rabbi Jacob Karzen, tel. 972-2-563-1018, cellular 972-52-383-3835 or email [jkarzen@netvision.net.il](mailto:jkarzen@netvision.net.il).

### **Jewish Secular Burial:**

Secular burial is permitted in some cemeteries in Green-Line Israel only. There is a plan for a secular cemetery in Jerusalem, pending final approvals of the Jerusalem Municipality. Presently, the nearest secular cemetery to Jerusalem is in Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim, approximately 15 minutes drive from the city: call 054-4291791 or email [info@daletamot.co.il](mailto:info@daletamot.co.il) for details. Additional information on secular burial, call “Aley Shalechet” (Autumn Leaves) at 1-800-333-188, or [The Portal of Jewish Secular Rites](#).

### **“Non-Jewish” Burial:**

Individuals who were never confirmed as Jews by Jewish Law (i.e. “Halacha”) are defined as “non-Jews” by Israeli law and have a special status vis-à-vis [burial](#). Some Jewish burial societies (“Hevra Kadisha”) maintain divisions which take care of burial of non-Jews in separate areas. Additionally, there are private burial organizations which facilitate non-Jews burial, of which some receive the Israeli Government recognition.

For further information in Jerusalem, contact the Jewish Burial Society at 972-72-325-8716 / 972-2-625-2281. In Green Line Israel, there are several cemeteries offering alternative secular burial services. Among those are the Mesilla Cemetery (near Kibbutz Bahan, Netanya), 972-4-6301140 / 972-50-6388854 and Menucha Nechona at tel. 972-73-2755777, email [info@mn-lekulam.org](mailto:info@mn-lekulam.org).

2. **Muslim Burial:** There is no charge for the grave plot. In Jerusalem, the cost of grave digging, shroud is around \$2000.00. Contact Sheikh Azzam El-Khatib at the Islamic High Council (Al-Waqf) at tel. 972-2-628-3292, 628-1222, 628-3313 or Mr. Azzam El-Khatib at 972-2-628-4851. Burial in the

West Bank is approximately \$600.00. Various West Bank city municipalities and village councils provide assistance and guidance regarding local burial. Contact the Consulate for town-specific information.

3. Christian Burial: in the exception of the two churches below, local Christian burial (i.e. Protestant, Lutheran, etc.) in Jerusalem is possible for members of local communities only:
  - Greek Catholic Burial: The cost for a coffin, burial services, sundries, and window vault amounts approximately \$1500.00. Contact Father Anton Habib at 972-2-6282023 or 972-54-7377856 for further details.
  - Roman Catholic: Total cost for burial expenses is approximately \$1200.00. Contact Father Rami at 972-2-6266613 or 972-2-6266777 for further details.
  - Greek Orthodox Burial: Burial at a local cemetery, which includes the plot, grave digging, coffin, funeral services and marker costs approximately \$2000, depending on the type of the coffin selected. For Funeral Service contact Mr. George Kamar at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, telefax. 972-2-628-2048, Community Council tel. 972-2-6289112. For burial services and other requirements contact Mr. Nabil Bajalil at 972-2-627-1350.

#### Costs: Shipment of Remains to the United States:

1. Embalming:
  - Institute of Forensic Medicine: Approximately \$850.00
  - Noam Embalming Services: Approximately \$1500.00
  - Israel Embalming Services: Approximately \$1500.00
2. Transportation from Jerusalem to embalming establishments: approximately \$500.00
3. Shipping costs: Average cost of airfreight to the US is from \$2000.00 to \$3000.00, depending on weight of the remains and destination in the U.S.

#### G. Exhumation of Remains:

In accordance with the Israeli health regulations, remains of persons of the Jewish faith may be disinterred a year after the burial. As for remains of persons of other faiths, there is no law prohibiting disinterment at any given time, provided that the Ministry of Health has no objection. The exhumation must be performed in the presence of a representative of the Israeli Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health, having given the necessary permission for exhumation of remains, must also obtain the consent of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel for exhumation of the remains of persons of the Jewish faith. For exhumation of the remains of persons of the Muslim faith, the consent of the Islamic High Council is needed, and for exhumation of persons of the Christian faith, church consent is required. The Burial Society is then called upon to exhume the remains. Depending on the stage of decomposition, remains to be shipped may require embalming. Exhumation-related charges are as follows:

- Ministry of Health - Certificate of Consent and presence of representative at exhumation: \$250;
- Exhumation fee: \$1500 - \$2000.
- Approximate freight charges to the US: \$2000;

The Burial Society fee can vary widely, according to the arrangements made between the Society and the family of the deceased. It also depends on the financial status of the family. Therefore, it is impossible to give a fixed amount.

#### H. Remarks:

Cause of Death: Routinely, the cause of death is not normally stated on the Palestinian and Israeli Death Certificates. At the same time, cause of death may be stated on the official notice from a doctor, paramedic, or hospital. Additionally, families may request the cause of death be added to the Certificate. This might not be required when either an autopsy has been performed, and/or the remains are to be shipped outside of Israel.

Autopsies: Autopsies in Israel are performed in Israel in cases where the cause of death is unclear. Under other circumstances, where foul play is suspected

and the Israeli police require an autopsy (once permission is granted by the next of kin), the family is not obliged to pay the cost of the autopsy. In cases where the family is required to pay the costs, it is approximately \$1200.00. In the West Bank, the Palestinian National Authority, Forensic Medical Center in Abu Dees can also perform autopsy (fees may depend on the circumstance of the individual case). Note: For security reasons autopsies performed by Palestinian Forensic Medical center may not honored by the Israeli Government.

- Forensic Medical Center / Abu Dees University: Director: Dr. Saber Alaloul, telefax 972-2-279-0590. Website: <http://www.alquds.edu/en>
- Forensic Medicine Institution, Al-Najah University, Nablus. Director: Dr. Rayan Al-Ali. Tel. 972-9-234-5113 fax. 972-2-234-5982. Email: [pr@najah.edu](mailto:pr@najah.edu), University website: <http://www.najah.edu>.