



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 7, 2011

FROM: AmEmbassy Amman

SUBJ: DEATH: Disposition of Remains

TAGS: CASC, JO

TO: Department of State - CA/OCS

REF: 7 FAM 251

The following is an outline of current Jordanian requirements and established local customs for burial, cremation, embalming, preparation for shipment, and exhumation of remains of deceased persons. These requirements conform with international practice. Estimated costs for local burial and for preparation and shipment of remains to the United States are given, using current prices which may be subject to change.

A. Maximum period before burial:

Burial must take place within 24 hours following death. In special circumstances, this period may be extended to 48 hours with a permit from the Ministry of Health. If the body is placed in a refrigerated unit, it is possible to delay burial under Jordanian law up to 72 hours. There are appropriate refrigeration units available at government hospitals in Amman, Aqaba, Irbid, Zarqa and Ma'an. The refrigerator's daily rate varies between JD 10.00 (\$15.00) to JD 20.00 (\$30.00). If the death did not occur in a recognized hospital, local regulations require a government autopsy prior to burial or shipment. These requirements apply regardless of the religion of the deceased. However, Israel and Jordan have agreed to forgo autopsies in special cases, in particular for persons who identify themselves as members of the Jewish faith. The body must be moved to Israel as soon as possible after the death occurs.

B. Embalming:

Embalming is available in Jordan, but is not customary, so standards may not be consistent with U.S. practice. Facilities for embalming are provided by the Department of Forensic Pathology of the Ministry of Health, located at Al-Bashir Hospital in Amman. The cost of embalming by the Department of Forensic Pathology is JD 100.00 or \$143.00 at the current rate of exchange. Such facilities also are available at the Jordan University hospital. Embalming is not customary if the burial is to be done locally.

C. Cremation:

Cremation is prohibited due to Islamic law and customs.

D. Caskets and Containers:

Strictly utilitarian caskets and zinc containers which meet the requirements for international and U.S. interstate transportation of remains can be made to order locally. One undertaker also has U.S. standard caskets, manufactured in Indiana, which are considerably more expensive JD 2000.00 (\$2860.00) to JD 7500.00 (\$10715.00).

E. Exportation of Remains:

Government of Jordan regulations stipulate the following for the export of a body from Jordan:

1. Embalm the remains.
2. Certificate of Embalment.
3. A lead or zinc lined hardwood casket at least 27 millimeters thick. The body must be packed with an absorbent and disinfectant material such as chloride of lime, zinc sulfate, or charcoal.
4. The casket must be placed in a wooden shipping crate or on a pallet.
5. Death Certificate from the Department of Civil Registration.
6. An export permit from the Ministry of Health which lists the name, age, sex, address, religion, nationality, and cause of death. When the listed cause of death is cholera, plague or yellow fever, export can be carried out only with a special permit from the Ministry of Health.
7. Police certificate of placement of remains in the coffin.

F. Costs:

All dollar costs have been converted from the cost in local currency at the rate of exchange of 0.70 Jordanian Dinars to \$1.00 and then rounded off. These prices may vary significantly at any specific time, due to the actual exchange rate.

1. SIMPLE LOCAL BURIAL (including documentation, minimal casket, burial plot, and burial)

JD 6000.00 or \$8575.00

2. PREPARATION FOR SHIPMENT (including documentation, embalming, minimal casket, crate, labor, and transport to airport)

JD 9000.00 or \$12860.00

3. TRANSPORTATION OUT OF THE COUNTRY:

Average weight of casket and containers required for export of remains is 250 KGS. Below are estimated costs for air shipment. On many occasions, we were notified that only Royal Jordanian Airlines carries remains out of Jordan. Royal Jordanian Airlines provided the following average rates per kilo, actual costs may vary, depending on routing. An additional \$0.900 per kilo fuel and security surcharges would apply.

<u>Amman to</u>	<u>Rate per KG.</u>	<u>Total</u>
New York	\$13.00	\$3,250.00
Chicago	\$13.00	\$3,250.00
Los Angeles	\$13.00	\$3,250.00
Miami	\$13.00	\$3,250.00
Houston	\$13.00	\$3,250.00

4. TOTAL COSTS (Preparation and Shipment):

<u>Amman To</u>	<u>Total</u>
New York	\$16,110.00
Chicago	\$16,110.00
Los Angeles	\$16,110.00
Miami	\$16,110.00
Houston	\$16,110.00

G. Exhumation and shipment:

A body may be disinterred one year after burial unless the cause of death was cholera, plague, or yellow fever. In these cases, there are no legal provisions for disinterment. In those instances where disinterment is permitted, a written request must be made, by next of kin, to the Ministry of Health giving the identity of the deceased, the cause of death, and the reason for the request. A Jordanian Medical Officer will issue a written permit and must be present when the grave is opened and the body packed for shipment. The requirements listed in section (E) above also apply to the export of exhumed bodies.

Because Jordan is a Muslim country, disturbing remains in any manner is quite a serious and sensitive undertaking. Consequently, authorization for exhumation must be arranged on a personal basis with the authorities concerned, and both the negotiations and the disinterment must be handled with utmost discretion. It is conceivable that, in a case where written permission to exhume has been obtained, no Medical Officer would agree to oversee the disinterment and packing.

CONS:NMLynn/rs