

## **Disposition of Remains**

Updated: October 2012

The following information is provided to assist families of U.S. citizens who pass away in the Shanghai consular district in making initial decisions about the disposition of their relative's remains. Our consular district includes Shanghai, as well as Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.

If the next of kin will not personally handle the disposition of remains in China, he or she must email, fax or mail a notarized power of attorney to the Consulate and call the Consular Section to confirm the desire to designate a legal representative in China. Usually, the next of kin would give the funeral home, SOS, a locally-based friend or relative, or the deceased's employer or school power of attorney to handle any necessary arrangements.

Please modify the power of attorney as needed according to the next of kin's preferences. The Consulate will attach a letter to the notarized power of attorney and provide it to the designated agent or relevant Chinese authorities.

**Please note that any costs listed below are only estimates; actual costs can be confirmed through the relevant funeral home or service.**

### **Autopsies**

If the next of kin of a deceased U.S. citizen is not satisfied with the Chinese police or hospital report about the cause of death, they can request an autopsy. Such requests must be submitted to the relevant Public Security Bureau (PSB) office, and generally delay the issuance of the death certificate by approximately one month.

Please note that the local forensic center in Shanghai charges an estimated 30,000 RMB (roughly \$4,700) for an autopsy.

If an autopsy is requested, the local death certificate will not be available for approximately one month. The Consulate cannot issue a Consular Report of Death Abroad until the local death certificate is received.

If there is no specific cause of death from an autopsy, hospital or police report, the Chinese death certificate will list the cause of death as the

generic term “sudden death.” **Please note that this could complicate any insurance claims.**

### **Cremation**

**Cremation must be carried out within 15 days of death** except in special circumstances. Such “special circumstances” include a request by the Consulate and the next of kin to permit the family to request an autopsy or an investigation of an unnatural death. Cremation will also be delayed if there is difficulty in contacting the next of kin or if the next of kin has not given specific instructions for the disposition of remains.

According to Chinese health and safety regulations, cremation is required if a person’s remains are to be interred in China rather than returned to the U.S. Chinese law does not allow for foreigners to be buried in China.

Nearly every city and town in the consular district has at least one cremation facility. Cremation arrangements can be made with the Long Hua Funeral Home in Shanghai, the Suzhou Funeral Home in Suzhou, and the Hangzhou Funeral Home in Hangzhou. Please see our website for contact information for those and other funeral homes and service.

In Shanghai, the only document required for cremation is the Death Certificate issued by the Shanghai Entry and Exit Bureau (2895-1000, 1500 Ming Sheng Road, Pudong, Shanghai). To obtain this Death Certificate, you will need the passport of the deceased, as well as a death report from the hospital where they passed away or from the police if they passed away outside a hospital.

For areas outside Shanghai, the funeral home will need a hospital death certificate, and a translated and notarized copy of that certificate from a local Chinese notary public. In some cases, the funeral home may also need a death report issue by the local Public Security Bureau (PSB).

### **Embalming**

Embalming is available in larger cities in the Shanghai Consular District, including Shanghai, Nanjing, Ningbo and Hangzhou. Funeral homes generally require that embalming take place within 30 days of death.

The next of kin can arrange embalming directly with the funeral home, or through a legal representative, provided that a power of attorney has been signed and notarized in the U.S. If needed, the U.S. Consulate can certify this power of attorney for the funeral home. The funeral home

representative will manage all related matters including a report to the Entry and Exit Office of the PSB. Most local funeral homes have refrigeration facilities. In certain cases, staff of the Long Hua funeral home are able to travel to other cities to transport remains to Shanghai for embalming.

### **Caskets and Containers**

Both SOS and Long Hua funeral home provide coffins and iron casings for shipment. Customs and sanitation regulations require that the coffin's casing be welded shut in the presence of sanitation officials before the coffin can be transported. Containers for ashes are available from local funeral homes.

### **Export of Remains**

Cremated remains may be returned to the U.S. upon presentation of a death certificate and cremation certificate.

An embalmed body may be returned to the U.S. upon presentation of the following documents:

- Encoffining Certificate of Entry/Exit of Coffin with Human Remains issued by the funeral home
- Antiseptic Certification of Entry/Exit, issued by the funeral home
- Sanitary Supervision and Quarantine, issued by the funeral home
- Consular Report of Death Abroad issued by the U.S. Consulate
- Consular Mortuary Certificate issued by the U.S. Consulate

A representative of the funeral home must bring the first three documents to the U.S. Consulate, where they will obtain the last two documents. All documents will be shipped back to the U.S. with the remains.

### **Cost estimates**

The Consulate has obtained the following cost estimates from two funeral homes in the Shanghai area, Long Hua Funeral Home and Bao Xing Funeral Home. Costs in other areas in the consular district will likely be lower. SOS International's practice is to provide an exact cost for shipping remains back to the U.S. only after they receive detailed information of the shipment. They can provide estimates for other services on a case-by-case basis.

**All costs are estimates only, based on a 6.3 Chinese Renminbi (RMB) to 1 U.S. dollar (USD) exchange rate and current prices as of September 2012. Actual costs should be verified with the relevant funeral home or service.**

<b>Long Hua Funeral Home:</b>	<b>RMB</b>	<b>USD</b>
<i>Cremation of remains</i>		
Cremation:	6,000	<b>\$951</b>
Urn:	2,000	<b>\$317</b>
Shipment of Ashes	5,000	<b>\$793</b>
<b>Total:</b>	13,000	<b>\$2,063</b>
<i>Shipment of Remains</i>		
Transportation of the body to funeral home	1,000	<b>\$159</b>
Transportation of the body to airport	1,200	<b>\$190</b>
Embalming:	5,000	<b>\$794</b>
Make-up:	1,000	<b>\$159</b>
Preparation of a viewing room, if needed:	1,000	<b>\$159</b>
Coffin/Iron case:	17,000	<b>\$2,698</b>
Welding of Coffin:	500	<b>\$79</b>
Storage Room:	50/day	<b>\$7.9</b>
Notary/Custom Declaration	6,000	<b>\$952</b>
Service Charge:	4,600	<b>\$730</b>
Airway Bill (China Eastern):	38,000 – 40,000	<b>\$6,032-6,349</b>

<b>Total cost of shipment of remains:</b>	81,350 –83,350	<b>\$13,229-13,546</b>
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<b>Bao Xing Funeral Home:</b>	<b>RMB</b>	<b>USD</b>
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*Cremation of remains*

Cremation:	5,000	<b>\$794</b>
Urn:	2,000	<b>\$317</b>
<b>Total:</b>	13,000	<b>\$2,063</b>

*Shipment of Remains*

Transportation of the body to funeral home	1,000	<b>\$159</b>
Transportation of the body: to airport	1,200	<b>\$190</b>
Embalming:	5, 000	<b>\$794</b>
Make up	1,000	<b>\$159</b>
Sanitary Guarantee Room	1,000	<b>\$159</b>
Coffin/Iron case	17,000	<b>\$2,698</b>
Welding of Coffin	500	<b>\$79</b>
Storage Room:	50/day	<b>\$8</b>
Notary/Custom Declaration	5,000	<b>\$794</b>
Service Charge:	4,000	<b>\$635</b>
Airway Bill (China Eastern):	35,000 – 38,000	<b>\$5,556-\$6,032</b>
<b>Total cost of shipment of Remains</b>	77,750 –80,750	<b>\$12,342-\$12,818</b>

## **Exhumation and Shipment**

Requests for exhumation from a cemetery can be made only by the next of kin to the cemetery administrative office with documentation of ownership of the graveyard. Permission from the Municipal Sanitary Inspection and Quarantine Bureau is required.

Long Hua and Bao Xing funeral homes will accept the exhumation request if a power of attorney certified by the U.S. Consulate is provided.

Cost of exhumation and shipment depends on the condition of the remains. Total cost of the exhumation and shipment will generally be much higher than basic shipment of remains.

## **Unclaimed remains**

According to Chinese regulations, if a foreign citizen dies in China without family, employer or friends who can make arrangements for disposition of remains, and the local PSB where the death occurred first makes a report to the provincial level PSB. The provincial-level PSB will then send a diplomatic note to the U.S. Consulate requesting guidance on the disposition of remains within 30 days. If no reply is received or the reply is unclear, the provincial PSB will send a follow-up diplomatic note to the Consulate. If a reply is still not received, the provincial PSB will send a letter to the local funeral home asking them to cremate the body. The ashes will be kept by the funeral home for one year after cremation.

我们提供以下信息，来协助在华东领区去世的美国公民的家属初步决定如何处理逝者的后事。华东领区包括上海市，安徽省，江苏省和浙江省。

如果逝者的直系亲属不能亲自来中国处理逝者的后事，他/她必须先通过电子邮件，传真或者写信的方法发送一份经过公证的授权书至领事馆，指定一位在中国的法定代表人来代理逝者的后事。而后再打电话至领事馆确认。通常，直系亲属可指定殡仪馆、国际救援组织、在中国当地的亲友、逝者的工作单位或者学校为代理人来处理必要的手续。

如您需要授权书的样本，请参考[这里](#)，此授权书样本可以按照直系亲属的详细情况做相应修改。领事馆收到后，会将经过公证的授权书连同领事馆出具的说明信一同递交给被指定的代理人或中方相关部门。

**请注意，下面列出的任何费用，只是粗略估计，实际价格可通过相关殡仪馆或殡葬服务部门来确认。**