

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS REPORT

U.S. Embassy Colombo, Sri Lanka

October 2015

PART I. Name of Country

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

PART II. U.S. Embassy Information

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[Consular Information Sheet](#)
[Register With the U.S. Embassy](#)

PART III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.

Country Profile: See "[Background Note: Sri Lanka](#)"

Host Country Religions: Buddhism is the religion of about 65% of the population in Sri Lanka, with Islam constituting 7.6%, Hinduism 7.1%, and Christianity 6.2% and other religions constituting the balance.

Religious Activities for Visitors: English is spoken in many of the larger Christian churches. Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Christian Science, Mormon, Seventh - day Adventist, and Dutch Reformed Churches are all represented. Sri Lanka has no Orthodox churches and no synagogues. There are Islamic mosques and Hindu temples in Colombo, and Buddhist temples abound.

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in the Host Country:

A.F. Raymond Limited (all services related to cremation, burial and shipment)

115 Rt. Hon. D.S. Senanayake Mawatha (“Raymond House”)
Colombo 8, Sri Lanka

Telephone: +94-11-268-3226 or +94-11-269-3737
+94-11-269-3738 or +94-11-461-7813
+94-11-535-2076 or +94-11-535-2078

E-mail: afraymond@eureka.lk

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DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Colombo, Sri Lanka assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following person(s) or firm(s). 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, morticians and other service providers.

Part V. Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains:

Cremation is the norm in Sri Lanka among the Buddhist and Hindu populations, which constitute a majority. Burials are common for the Christian and Muslim community. Due to limited refrigerated storage facilities available at hospitals, prompt arrangements for transfer of a body to a funeral home are required soon after a death. Police stations and hospitals usually have local funeral home contacts available for the next of kin.

a. Maximum Period Before Burial: There are no provisions under Sri Lankan law that requires burial to take place within any prescribed period, whether in the case of embalming or otherwise. However, because of climatic conditions, putrefaction sets in within 24 hours of death, and in some cases much earlier.

b. Embalming: Modern embalming facilities, using American preservative fluids, are available in Colombo. The embalmers who are practicing at present in Colombo have been trained in England. There is no law prescribing how soon after death a body must be embalmed. If a body has been embalmed, the remains can be kept for any length of time in private chapels of rest, or in mortuaries until shipment or interment.

c. Cremation: Cremation is permitted by law. There are gas operated crematoriums located in Colombo, Mount Lavinia, Kandy and most other provincial burial grounds. The submission of a death certificate, which is required for all local burials, is necessary before cremations can take

place. A death certificate is obtainable from the local registrar of births and deaths on the production of a certificate of death from the attending physician.

d. Caskets and Containers: The regulations prescribed by the Public Health Department of the Colombo Municipality require that for shipment the remains must be disinfected and embalmed and the coffin placed in a heavy metal-lined hardwood casket, tightly packed with the disinfecting powder and saw dust, and hermetically sealed. This casket must then be placed in a metal-lined, hardwood shipping case, which must also be tightly packed with disinfecting powder and sawdust, and hermetically sealed. These precautionary measures are taken to prevent any damage to public health. All facilities for shipment of a body in accordance with the above regulations are available in Colombo.

e. Exportation of Remains: Due to Exchange Control regulations, the payment of freight charges for shipment of a body has to be from the Port of Colombo, on the authority of the City's Medical Officer of Health. The body should be prepared for shipment in the manner described in (d) above, and the inner casket sealed in the presence of a representative from the Public Health Department of the Colombo Municipality. An urn containing ashes must be packed in a metal lined hermetically sealed casket, which must be enclosed in an outer case for shipping. Caskets and coffins made of metal are not used for burials in Sri Lanka. According to local parlance, a "casket" is a more expensive, streamlined drop-side coffin. The price of both the casket and the coffin vary according to the material and fittings used. It is therefore possible to order a coffin for as little as \$250 and reduce the cost of the other services proportionately. While cheaper service at competent prices might be available for burial or cremation with the remains or ashes staying in Sri Lanka, it is not likely that cheaper service would be available for returning remains or ashes to the U.S., because of the specialized services involved. These costs are based upon Sri Lankan Rupee estimates provided by local undertakers and shipping companies converted at the current rate of exchange. These rates may be changed in the future. The Embassy believes these estimates to be high. It is possible to arrange much less expensive funerals in Colombo.

f. Exhumation and Shipment: The permission of the Medical Officer of Health of the City together with a certified copy of the Burial Entry and an application under terms of Volume VIII, Chapter 231 of the Revised Edition of the Legislative Enactments, must be submitted to the district judge having jurisdiction in order to obtain the necessary authority for the disinterment of the remains. When authority is granted, disinterment must take place in the presence of the Medical Officer of Health of the City. The disinterred body must be thoroughly disinfected and packed in the same manner as described in (e) above.

g. Costs: The prices below are from A.F. Raymond. Please note that current airfreight charges for shipment of remains to the United States from Sri Lanka are about US\$2000. The shipment of ashes will cost about US\$700. All prices quoted below are in U.S. Dollars.

1. Preparation for shipment of remains abroad

• Zinc Air freight casket and shipping case	1200
• Embalming as per selected independent funeral homes (USA) Standards and preparation of body	950
• Mortuary fee	475
• Transportation of remains from within Colombo city limits to the mortuary and airport:	910
• Official fees including medical officer, customs, airport handling fees & personal attendance	875
• 2% Special Government Tax	90
Total Cost	4,560

Those wishing to transport the remains of their loved ones to the United States should also get in touch with a local funeral home in the United States to make arrangements to receive remains.

2. Preparation for shipment of ashes abroad

• Casket/Coffin	750
• Zinc ash casket & shipping case	350
• Local Embalming & preparation of body	525
• Mortuary fee	475
• Transportation of remains from within city limits to mortuary, cemetery and airport	910
• Official fees including cremation, customs, airport handling fees & services and personal attendance	875
• 3% Special Government Tax	78
Total Cost	3,963

3. Burial of body in Sri Lanka

• Casket/ Coffin	750
• Local embalming & preparation of body	525
• Mortuary fee	475
• Transportation of remains from within Colombo city limits to mortuary and cemetery	625
• Official fee & services including grave fee & personal attendance	550
• 2% Special Government Tax	59
Total Cost	2,984

4. Cremation and burial of ashes in Sri Lanka

• Casket/Coffin	750
• Local embalming & preparation of body	525
• Mortuary fee	475
• Transportation of remains from within city limits to mortuary and cemetery	625
• Zinc ash casket & burial case	350
• Official fees & service including crematorium fee, grave fee & personal attendance	550
• 3% Special Government Tax	55
Total Cost	3,330

Notes:

- A.F. Raymond does not have traveling cases or steel caskets. They only use hermetically sealed zinc lined air freight caskets.
- Removing remains outside Colombo city limits would be charged at the rate of US\$7 per return mile.
- Use of funeral parlor per day is US\$100