



British Embassy
Santiago

Information sheet relating to deaths in Chile
Prepared by Consular Section
British Embassy Chile

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world/chile>

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GUIDANCE FOR NEXT OF KIN

The death of a relative or a friend can be a traumatic experience. When the death occurs overseas, family and friends in the UK can feel additional distress as you are unfamiliar with foreign procedures and perhaps are unable to communicate in the language of the country where the death occurred. Consular Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and our Consulate in Santiago are ready to help as far as we can. You may be uncertain about what to do next or who to contact for advice. These notes are designed to help you through the practical arrangements you will need to make. (You should be aware that Chilean procedures differ significantly to those in the United Kingdom and that, while we understand your need for arrangements to be made quickly, this is not always possible).

Standard Procedures

Following the death of a British National in Chile, their Next of Kin, or a formally appointed representative must decide whether to repatriate the deceased to the UK, or carry out a local burial or cremation. If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, it is important for next of kin to contact the Insurance company without delay. If there is no insurance cover, the cost of repatriation or burial will need to be met by the family. Neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Office nor the British Embassy in Chile have a budget to meet these costs.

Autopsies (Post Mortems)

Autopsies will be carried out in all cases of uncertain, violent or suspicious death, or when requested by a judge.

In these cases and following local law, the body may not be released for repatriation until the judge is satisfied that all local procedures have been carried out and that no further tests on the body will be necessary for the investigation.

In circumstances where the judge authorises the early release of a body following a request from the family, **affected organs can be retained to enable forensic doctors to carry out further tests if needed.**

Consular Section can usually request a copy of the report from the court on behalf of the family, but there are instances in which the judge will only give copies or any other information relating to the case to the family's appointed lawyer. We can provide a list of English speaking lawyers.

Storage

The deceased will normally be held at a local hospital or at the SML (Legal Medical Service, Morgue). However, you should be aware that storage facilities could vary depending on the part of the country. Most morgues will not be the same standard as those in the UK. Although we will do everything we possibly can do to ensure that the deceased is placed in appropriate storage we cannot guarantee the condition of the body.

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Mortuary facilities

There is a morgue in Santiago with cold storage facilities and most others in Chile have such facilities.

Each funeral home has its own cold storage facilities. The one generally used by the Embassy has also a room for the wake.

Repatriation and Burial

The Next of Kin should send us a fax authorising us to act on their behalf. It will be up to the judge if he is willing to accept this, but he may well request that the family appoints a lawyer to act on their behalf or he may also request that the authorisation and other documents provided by the family should be notarised, legalised and sent in original.

The family needs to appoint an international funeral director for the repatriation of the body who subsequently will send a fax authorising the local burial company to deal with the paperwork and with the release of the body from the morgue. If the deceased had insurance the insurance company should be notified immediately as they will decide who to appoint. We can get in touch with the court and try to speed up the process so that the body can be repatriated as soon as possible. Legal procedures can be lengthy in Chile, but the process generally takes from one to two weeks for straight forward cases.

Local Cremation

Local Funeral Directors can help with arranging the cremation. A local death certificate issued by the Civil registry office, a letter from next of kin giving permission to cremate, original passport of the deceased, and 'sometimes' a 'no objection' letter from the British Embassy Chile are required in order to carry out the cremation. If the next of kin choose to have a local cremation and take back the ashes to the UK themselves, they can do so with minimum bureaucracy (next of kin should be in Chile in order to do so).

There are local cremation facilities in Chile:

Antofagasta:

Cementerio Parque y Crematorio San Cristobal
Camino a Cerro Moreno s/n
55-263713
55-211026
ventas@constructoraeta.cl

Viña del Mar:

Cementerio Parque del Mar/ Crematorio.
6 Norte 655 Vina del Mar
+56-2-32-238 7000
Emergency phone number +56-2-600 600 8500
Gerarda.huerta@parquedelmar.cl
<http://www.parquedelmar.cl/index2.php>

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Santiago: Cementerio General,

Av. Profesor Alberto Zañartu 951,
Recoleta - Santiago (acceso Av. La Paz)
+ (56) 2 26377800 Fax: +56 2 27778552
cementerio@cementeriogeneral.cl

Cementerio Católico

Av. Monseñor Valdivieso 555
Recoleta
+56-2-27372686
cementeriocatolico@acoger.cl

Concepción:

Cementerio General de Concepción
Rodolfo Briceno s/n Concepción
+56-2-41-2853896
+56-2-41-2853892
Cementerioconcepcion@tie.cl

Temuco:

Cinerario Temuco
Luis Picasso V. 1420
Pueblo Nuevo
+56-2-45-389469
cinerario@tie.cl

Punta Arenas:

Cementerio Municipal de Punta Arenas, Sara Braun.
9 Magallanes
+56-61-212777

Registration of the death

A local death certificate will be issued in Spanish by Registro Civil e Identificación (Civil Registry Office). This is likely to take between 24 to 72 hours, depending on each city in the country. The local death certificate will show the cause of death. The funeral home will legalise the certificate for it to be valid in the UK.

Return of Personal Effects

Ordinary personal effects can be repatriated with the body. Valuables are a problem. We are generally able to send them with the other luggage along with the body, but this might not always be possible.

Police / Judicial enquiries

When suspicious deaths occur or in the event of road traffic accidents, the police take action and will provide a report of the events to the judge. We can generally obtain a copy for the family.

If the police apprehends a suspect and the State decides to prosecute, a brief summary of the procedure would be:

- The detainee will hire a private lawyer or if not a public defender will be appointed to defend him.
- The penal procedure has 2 stages:
 - 1) Investigation stage (período de investigación) during which the prosecutor and the public defender investigate the case. It should take a maximum approximately 3 months, unless there are special reasons to extend this period.
 - 2) The Oral trial (juicio oral). The detainee will be given an oral trial date. There are 3 -4 judges in each case. Anybody can attend the hearing. The judges will give their sentence, at the end of the trial. This usually happens the same day.

Legal aid

There is legal aid in very exceptional cases for Chilean nationals of very low income. It has never been heard of this being granted to foreign nationals.