Death/Bereavement Information for Ukraine

Prepared by British Embassy Kyiv

www.gov.uk/world/ukraine

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Introduction

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 they 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 Embassy in Ukraine are ready to help as far as they 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 Ukrainian procedures may differ to those in the United Kingdom and that, while we understand your need for arrangements to be made quickly, this is not always possible.

In addition to this information, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office produces a Bereavement Guide which you may also find helpful. This is available on https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death.

Autopsies (Post Mortems)

Under Ukrainian law, a post mortem is required for any death of a foreigner occurring in Ukraine.

Autopsies are performed following court permission and it might take more than 24 hours of death. Medical death certificate with the details of the cause of death is normally issued. A full autopsy report may be obtained on request.

A written permission from the next-of-kin to carry out an autopsy is required. Permission can be faxed or emailed to the Embassy or FCO Consular Department and the Embassy staff will then prepare an official letter to the local authority in the Ukrainian language.

Mortuary Facilities

Mortuary facilities are satisfactory in most large cities. Morgues are generally located in hospitals and have refrigerated facilities. However, they are not ideal and Western standard individual fridges are not available. Standards in other regions are considerably lower. In some provincial areas only cooler basements are available.

Local Burial

A body can normally be released for burial, cremation or repatriation once the autopsy is completed.

A local death certificate must be obtained prior to burial.

Local burial is possible and can be organised by either state or private undertakers. Coffins and tombstones are available for purchase.
Please note that inquest will not take place in the UK if a local burial or local cremation takes place.

**Repatriation**

If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, it is important that you contact the insurance company without delay to check whether they can cover repatriation. If the insurance company grants cover, they will normally have a standing agreement with an International funeral director in Britain to arrange repatriation on your behalf. If there is no insurance cover, the cost of repatriation, local burial or cremation will need to be met by the family. You may think of appointing an international undertaker in the UK or local funeral company and they will help you through the whole process.

Neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Office nor our Embassy in Ukraine will be able to meet these expenses.

There are some private local companies who have handled repatriations in liaison with UK funeral assistance companies in the past:

**Assist Ukraine**  
3, Sholudenka str  
tel: (+380 44) 251 2811  
fax: (+380 44) 239 9056  
e-mail: assist@assist-ukraine.com  
www.assist-ukraine.com

**Skorbota company**  
77, Olesya Honchara str  
tel/fax: (+38 044) 236 0213  
e-mail: skorbota@svitonline.com  
www.skorbota.com.ua

**Pohoron buro**  
tel: (+380 44) 209 39 85  
mob: (+38 098) 271 19 31  
mob: (+38 067) 178 86 18  
e-mail: pbyro@icloud.com; glanok@icloud.com  
http://pohoron-byro.at.ua

**Bringing ashes home**

When leaving Ukraine with human ashes you will need to show death and cremation certificates.

Each country has its own rules about departing with human ashes and there may be additional requirements if you travel via multiple countries to the UK.
If you are travelling by air to the UK, please contact your airline to find out whether you can carry the ashes as hand or checked-in luggage. They may ask you to put the ashes in a non-metallic container so that they can be x-rayed.

**Local Death Registration**

Registration of the death with the local authorities is mandatory. You will be given a local death certificate. No cremation or burial would be performed without this document.

According to the Ukrainian legislation an application for death registration with the local authorities should be made as soon as the post mortem document is complete.

A local death certificate will be issued in the Ukrainian language, based on the medical records. The certificate is usually available within a day or two. Please note that it may take longer to issue a certificate if death takes place in a provincial area. Death certificate does not give details of the cause of death, as would be the case in the UK.

If you need to use the locally issued certificate in the UK it may require an apostille (service is provided by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine) and certified translation into English.

**Consular Death Registration**

Although not obligatory, it is possible to register the death of a British national who has died in Ukraine with the UK authorities. Further information is available at [www.gov.uk/register-a-death](http://www.gov.uk/register-a-death).

**British Passport**

In order to avoid identity fraud, a deceased person's passport should be submitted for cancellation to the British Embassy in Ukraine or Her Majesty’s Passport Office in the UK. Next of kin can request the passport to be returned.

**Return of Personal Effects**

Personal belongings found on the deceased at the time of death are either handed over to the family if they are present or taken by the police to be handed over to the family members or their legal representative at a later stage.

The British Embassy in Ukraine cannot become involved in storing, collecting or forwarding personal belongings.
**Police/Judicial Inquiries / Deaths in Suspicious circumstances**

In case of suspicious or accidental death the police will lead an investigation. Once the investigation is completed, a report is prepared and passed to the Prosecutor’s Office. A copy of the report can be requested but it may take weeks.

The Prosecutor’s Office will then decide whether further enquiries are necessary, or whether to submit the case to the Court for a trial to take place. This is usually a lengthy process subject to delay and postponement.

**Road Deaths**

If your relative has died in a road traffic accident and you are resident in the UK, we will notify the UK road safety charity “Brake” ([www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)).

Brake is a road safety charity that provides dedicated support for people bereaved or seriously injured in road crashes. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is working in partnership with Brake to ensure British people bereaved through road crashes abroad can access specialist support. The Brake helpline (tel. 0808 8000 401 or email [helpline@brake.org.uk](mailto:helpline@brake.org.uk)) can offer a range of support, including:

- Providing advice on how to cope with the terrible shock and trauma
- Helping you understand procedures, such as how to seek legal help and court cases
- Liaising with officials on your behalf if you’re finding it difficult to get answers or don’t have the energy to speak for yourself
- Helping you access face to face support and counselling from experts.

**Legal Support**

There is a list of local English speaking lawyers at our [website](http://www.brake.org.uk) for your convenience in case you need professional legal advice.

**Other Information**

[Tell Us Once](#) is a service that lets you report a death to most UK government organizations (HMRC, DWP, DVLA, Passport Office, the local council) in one go.

**Compensation**

There are no formal Government compensation schemes available but damages can be claimed from the accused and a decision will be made by the judge when the case is heard.
Contacts for the British Embassy in Ukraine:

British Consulate Kyiv
9, Desyatynna St.
Kyiv, 01901
Ukraine

Web contact form
Tel: +380 44 490 3660
Fax: +380 44 490 3662
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