



British Embassy
Tehran

Iran – Bereavement Pack/ Information

Prepared by British Embassy Tehran

www.gov.uk

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, Commonwealth & Development Office and our Embassy in Iran 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 Iranian 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.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this document is not meant to be a definitive statement of the law, nor is it to be taken as a substitute for independent legal advice. Neither Her Majesty's Government nor its staff take any responsibility for the accuracy of the information, nor accept liability for any loss, costs, damage or expense that you may encounter as a result of relying on the information. Some of the information may not be relevant to your circumstances. The language used is intended to be general and factual and is not meant to cause offence.

Please see our separate guidance leaflets “Death Overseas” and “Guide for Bereaved Families” that are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-death-abroad>

Who is your Consular Representative?

Sandra Sianaki Pro Consul

Allan Cook HM Consul

Telephone during Office Hours: +98 21 64052014 Sunday-Thursday 07.30-14.30

Telephone out of hours: Global Response Centre +44 20 7008 1500 (available 24/7)

The priority of the FCDO is to provide assistance to British nationals overseas who need the most help. The level and type of assistance they can offer is tailored to the individual circumstances of each case.

In the Event of a Death

The death of a foreign national within Iran is dealt with by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the local Judiciary Authority. The police will notify the relevant authorities who in turn will notify the Consular Section of the Embassy for action when the Embassy next opens for business. Little can be done overnight or at weekends. The local weekend being Thursday and Friday, the Embassy is closed Friday and Saturday.

If the death of a British national in Iran is reported to the Embassy in Tehran and the next of kin is not present, we will request the UK police to inform the next of kin as soon as possible. If the next of kin is not in the UK, we will ask our consular staff in the country where they are to do this.

We will do everything we can to make sure that, as next of kin, you do not hear about the death first from the media, although we cannot always influence this. In exceptional circumstances, this may mean having to tell you about the death over the phone.

If the next of kin wishes to repatriate the body, we can help put them in touch with local and/or International Funeral Directors who can assist with local paperwork and advise on best procedures. If language is a problem, we can help the family with the arrangement including acting as a liaison point between the local funeral director and the family, if necessary.

The British Embassy Tehran cannot be responsible for collecting or returning personal belongings of the deceased. Any personal belongings of the deceased can only be returned to the next of kin upon completion of police enquiries and all local procedures. Personal belongings are usually transported to next of kin/ families via local agents or commercial courier companies if the family does not travel to Iran to collect the belongings themselves. Most courier/shipping companies will transport household goods, clothing and similar property.

The legal procedures can only be completed by the next of kin or the person acting on the instructions of the next of kin e.g. funeral directors.

The Embassy cannot investigate deaths nor give legal advice. We cannot pay burial expenses nor pay for the repatriation of bodies to the UK. The Embassy cannot pay any debts that may be outstanding.

Insurance

It is important to check if the person who died had insurance. If they had insurance then contact the insurance company as soon as possible. They may be able to help you make arrangements or cover some of the costs.

If the person who has died did not have insurance, the next of kin/ representative or sponsor (in the case of sponsored visitors) will usually be responsible for all costs relating to repatriation or burial. The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office cannot help with these costs.

Appointing a Funeral Director

There are no funeral directors in Iran. All the necessary procedures relating to a death are dealt with by the local authorities.

If you decide to repatriate the deceased to the UK for burial or cremation, you should consider appointing an international funeral director. The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office provides a list of some international funeral directors based in the UK:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-funeral-directors-in-the-uk

Procedure for Repatriation, Cremation and Burial

- Wherever the death occurred within Iran the body will be transported to the Legal Medico Office (LMO) in Tehran where the facilities provided by the Office of Legal Medicine/ Coroner's Office and Judiciary Offices are available.
- Here the accompanying documentation will be checked to confirm if the case requires an autopsy.
- Repatriation is usually arranged through a local Carrier Service after the necessary permits have been issued by the local authorities. Experienced companies in Tehran include:

Farahani Trading Company

Imam Khomeini Airport, Tehran

+98 21 56944874/ +98 9126595017/ +98 9354590417

Airland International LTD

214, Somaye Ave. Tehran

Email: laleh@airlandco.com

www.Airlandco.com

+98 21 88827877/ +98 9121239146

- If the next of kin has appointed a local representative he/she will receive the death certificate and follow due process to translate the document for the purpose of repatriation. Burial or repatriation cannot take place without first obtaining the death certificate. If the cause of death is not confirmed and further test results are pending, the death certificate will be issued but the cause of death will be entered as 'under investigation'. Test results can take as much as 100 days to be completed.
- If the deceased was a resident, the employer/sponsor must cancel the resident visa with the Immigration Police and also cancel the British passport and receive a letter of "No Objection to Repatriation" from the Embassy. A charge will be taken for this service.
- All necessary documentation must be presented to the local police authorities in order that an export permit be issued to the airport authorities and the deceased visa must be cancelled and presented to the Immigration Police at the airport.
- A flight must be booked for the repatriation.
- The next of kin or their representative will accompany the coffin to the airport customs where the documentation will be checked, identity confirmed and the coffin sealed in compliance with International standards.
- Documents required for a repatriation include: Original passport of deceased/ Death Certificate/Police Reports/ original cancelled Iranian Birth Certificate for Iranian/British nationals/ original authorisation letter issued by the Embassy to introduce the representative
- Burial is an option in Iran and this can usually be arranged by one of the local churches. If a local burial takes place there will be no inquest carried out in the UK.
- There are no cremation facilities in Iran.

Mortuary Facilities

Depending on where the death occurs the mortuary facilities will vary greatly within Iran. The provinces will usually provide basic facilities (cold storage) for short term retention, at the local government hospital.

Autopsy services and embalment/ preparation for repatriation are only carried out in the main government mortuary in Tehran. The standards applied at this facility are on a par with UK morgues.

Coroner's Office Contact (Tehran)

Autopsy Hall

Legal Medicine Organisation of Islamic Republic of Iran

Behesht Street, Southern Side of Park Shahr

Tel: (+98) (0) (21) 55609071-4

Fax: (+98) (0) (21) 55608003

Email: info@lmo.ir

Cemetery Office Tehran

Centre for Scientific & Educational research

Legal Medicine Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

500 Metres above the Eastern Door of Behesht-e-Zahra Cemetery

Old Ghom Road

Tehran, Iran

Tel: (+98) (0) (21) 51633000/ 55201031-9

Fax: (+98) (0) (21) 56524800-9

Police/Judicial Inquiries

In the case of a suspicious death or a road traffic accident the local police will lead an investigation and, once the report is prepared, it will be passed to the Public Prosecution Office. The victim's family are entitled to a copy of the report. The Public

Prosecution Office will decide if an autopsy is required for the investigation. They will also issue permission to release the body for repatriation or burial.

An ongoing investigation can delay the burial or repatriation of the deceased, also the timeframe of any investigation is dependent on the circumstances and will vary from case to case.

Legal Aid

Legal Aid is not available in Iran. If you need legal advice a list of English-speaking lawyers is available here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/iran-list-of-lawyers

Autopsy/ Post Mortem

Generally, any death occurring outside of a hospital will be referred to the police who will arrange for an examination of the deceased to take place. Following this examination, the deceased will be released only on the permission of the Prosecutor's Office. Under Islamic Law, the body should be buried as soon as possible after death so routine post mortem examinations are not common practice. Autopsies are only carried out if the cause of death is suspicious (i.e. Unnatural causes) when local authorities may authorise a post mortem as part of their investigation without the family's consent.

Organs are not permitted to be removed from a body under Islamic Law but in the course of an investigation it may be necessary to remove organs and these will be returned to the body in most cases. If necessary, biopsies are performed for toxicology tests and further examination. A final report will be available to the family upon completion of both the post mortem and the investigation into the circumstances of the death. A copy of the report must be requested from the prosecutor's office.

Compensation

There are no formal government compensation schemes available in Iran. If a case goes to court compensation may be granted at the discretion of the judge. A non-Muslim foreign national who is injured or dies as a result of injuries in a traffic accident will be eligible to collect blood-money (Diyeh) at the same rate fixed for Iranian Muslims.

Donation to Medical Science

Donation of the body to the Medical Science College of Iran is possible only in cases where no post mortem examination has been carried out. Donation may only be authorised by the next of kin of the deceased. For details of the Medical Science College of Tehran contact 0098 21 55442844.

Registration of the Death

Registration with local authorities:

- All deaths must be registered with the local authorities in the country where the person died.
- The local authorities will issue a death certificate which will need to be officially translated and certified by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- This local death certificate (translated from Farsi and certified by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) will be accepted in the UK for most purposes, including probate.

To Register a Death Overseas

Use this link to register the death and receive copies of the Overseas Death Registration Certificate if required:

<https://www.gov.uk/register-a-death>

This information is provided by the British Embassy for the convenience of enquiries, but neither HMG nor any official of the Embassy take responsibility for the accuracy of the advice given, or any change to local procedures.

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