



British
High Commission
Lusaka

DEATH IN ZAMBIA: INFORMATION SHEET

Revised August 2015

This should be distributed together with the FCO leaflet 'Death Overseas'.

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 High Commission in Lusaka are ready to help as far as they can. You may be uncertain about what to do 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 Zambian 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.

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.

BHC OFFICE HOURS

The Consular Section of the British High Commission is open to the public from Monday to Friday between 08:00 hours and 12:00 hours. Outside working hours (08:00 - 13:00 and 14:00 - 16:30 Monday to Thursday and 08:00 -13:00 hours Friday), please call the general telephone number for information on our out of hours service.

British High Commission
Embassy Park
Independence Avenue
P O Box 50050
Lusaka

Telephone: (0211) 423200
E-mail (Consular): LusakaConsularEnquiries@fco.gov.uk
E-mail (General): LusakaGeneralEnquiries@fco.gov.uk
Website: www.gov.uk/government/world/zambia

HOW CAN BRITISH CONSULS HELP?

- We can keep the next of kin informed. Our job is to ensure you do not feel you are on your own
- We can advise on the cost of local burial, local cremation and transport of the remains and personal property back to the UK
- We can provide a list of local funeral directors
- We can help transfer money from friends and relatives in the UK to pay any necessary costs
- Where there is evidence of suspicious circumstances we can press for an investigation by local authorities and pass on the results

WHAT WE CANNOT DO

- Investigate deaths
- Pay burial or cremation expenses
- Pay for the return of bodies and/or personal belongings to the UK
- Pay any debts that may be outstanding

WHERE DO I START?

The first step would be to appoint a funeral parlour as they will take care of most of the arrangements. A list is attached. The information that follows below will give you an idea of what to expect at the various stages.

AUTOPSIES (POST MORTEM)

Post-mortems are done as a rule if someone dies in the following circumstances:- suspicious circumstances; as a result of an accident; under legal custody; dies less than 24 hours of his/her admission to a hospital; if relatives want to claim compensation from insurance; if relatives want to remove the remains or ashes of the deceased person from Zambia. Post-mortems are normally carried out within 24 hours of the death by a pathologist at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka or if outside Lusaka at the local government hospital within the relevant district.

In Zambia, no organs are removed without the written consent of the next-of-kin. However, small tissue samples may be taken from one or more organs at the time of post-mortem to confirm the provisional diagnosis. If organs are removed with consent of the next-of-kin, the organs may be retained for medical students' studies.

Once the post-mortem has been completed, the pathologist's report is handed directly to the next-of-kin or, if unavailable, to the funeral parlour handling the arrangements.

MORTUARY FACILITIES

There are mortuaries at the University Teaching Hospital and at St Ann's Funeral Home in Lusaka. Both facilities are of similar standards to the UK and have excellent cold storage facilities. Some of the hospitals outside Lusaka do have mortuaries but these are very basic and do not have adequate cold storage facilities.

REPATRIATION AND BURIAL

A body can normally be released for burial, cremation or repatriation once the autopsy is complete. The most widely used funeral parlour in Zambia is Ambassador St Ann's Funeral Home in Lusaka (Telephone no: +260 211 288148). They can take care of most of the arrangements and have close contact with international funeral directors in the UK to assist with repatriation arrangements. They also stock a wide range of coffins, caskets, urns and headstones for sale.

Local burial is possible although the cemeteries are not very well maintained. Grave-robbing and vandalism is commonplace.

The only cremation facility in Lusaka is the Hindu Crematorium situated at St Ann's Funeral Home premises.

If a local burial or cremation takes place, there will be no inquest carried out in the UK.

REGISTRATION OF THE DEATH

A Zambian death certificate, citing the likely cause of death, will be issued in English and is usually available within a day or two of death. Registration of a death is the only procedure that the funeral parlour cannot assist with as the paperwork requires the signature of the next-of-kin. In circumstances where the next-of-kin is unavailable, the British High Commission will be able to assist with this as we have established contacts with the Registrar's Office. To register a death, you will need to obtain a **medical cause of death certificate** which is normally issued by the doctor at the hospital where the person died or was certified dead and once the pathologist's report has been released. The next step is to obtain a **burial/cremation permit** from the local council situated at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka or equivalent local council in other towns. Both these documents will need to be submitted to the Registrar's office together with a completed **Notice of Death form** duly signed by the next-of-kin. If the deceased was a foreign national, the Registrar will also need to see the passport of the deceased. Once the death is registered, a certificate will be issued free of charge. Additional copies can be obtained for a small fee.

You may also wish to register the death with the UK authorities. More information can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/register-a-death> .

RETURN OF PERSONAL EFFECTS

Personal effects are normally returned to the next-of-kin as a matter of course. If the body is being repatriated, and the next-of-kin are not available, the personal effects will be enclosed within the crate containing the coffin.

POLICE/JUDICIAL INQUIRIES

In the case of a suspicious death or road traffic accident, the Police (or Road Traffic Police, as appropriate) in the district in which the death occurred will lead an investigation. Please bear in mind that an investigation can take a considerable length of time as the police have very limited resources and often have to wait for transport and available staff to allocate to particular cases. Once the investigation is complete a report is prepared and handed to the public prosecutor. The police report will be made available, for a small fee, to the next-of-kin if they wish. The prosecutor will then decide whether further enquiries are necessary, or whether to submit the case to the court for a trial to take place. This can be a lengthy process and subject to delay and postponement. After the Judge has reached a verdict, the case will be deferred for sentencing if a guilty verdict or closed if otherwise. There is an appeal process, details of which can be obtained if necessary.

LEGAL AID

There is a Legal Aid Board (LAB) in Zambia, which is an autonomous body operating outside of the Ministry of Justice and is the only statutory body providing legal aid. However funding is a real constraint for this Board and it is unlikely that a foreign national would qualify for such aid, which is at the discretion of the Director of LAB. There are also various Civil Society Organisations providing legal aid, such as the Legal Resources Foundation (www.lrf.org.zm), although again funding is a constraint.

COMPENSATION

There are no formal government compensation schemes available, although damages can be claimed from the accused through the normal legal process, subject to the court's decision.

FUNERAL PARLOURS IN ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

Ambassador St Ann's Funeral Home
Mumbwa Road
P O Box 34192
LUSAKA

Tel (260 211) 288148
Fax (260 211) 287611/227519
E-mail nupur@zamnet.zm

Funeral Director: Mr S Kalaluka
Kelvin Ngolofwana

Tel (260 211) 286904/286258 (D/L)
Cell (0955) 788148

NDOLA

Ambassador St Ann's Funeral Home
North President Avenue
P O Box 71282
NDOLA

Tel (260 212) 620576/612910
Fax (260 212) 621264

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