



Deaths involving British Nationals in Singapore

The death of a relative or a friend can be a very traumatic experience. When a death occurs overseas, family and friends can feel additional distress if they are unfamiliar with foreign procedures and are unable to communicate in the language of the country where the death occurred. Consular Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and our British High Commission in Singapore 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.

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.

Post Mortems and Autopsies

It is mandatory that the death of any foreign national visitor that occurs whilst they are in Singapore is reported to the Coroner. If the death occurs in a hospital following an illness, an autopsy is only necessary if the doctor is unable to determine the cause of death, or a death has been the result of or has been contributed to by an unnatural event.

In such cases, the body will be sent to the Centre for Forensic Medicine (CFM) Mortuary, located at Block 9 Singapore General Hospital, Outram Road.

The Police investigator will arrange for the family to view and identify the deceased's body in the presence of the Coroner. This is usually the following morning after the death has occurred. The Coroner will review the case and determine if an autopsy is required. After an autopsy or if one is not required, the family will be informed of the Coroner's decision and the time to claim the body for the funeral/repatriation.

When the cause of death is not immediately apparent after a Coroner's autopsy is conducted, the term "Cardiorespiratory Failure Pending Further Investigations" is used as a provisional cause of death, so as to facilitate the funeral arrangements or the repatriation of the body to the deceased's country of origin. This may have implications on funeral arrangements in the UK. Further investigations will involve a number of ancillary investigations (tests) which are conducted in order to ascertain the definitive cause of death. The results can take up to three months to conclude.

If the autopsy reveals that the death is unnatural, the Police will conduct further investigations into the cause of death and the family may need to assist. Once the investigation is complete, the family will be told by the Police to attend a Coroner Inquiry at the Subordinate Courts.

Organs may be removed for examination and then replaced. There are no circumstances in which the organs will be removed and retained.

An autopsy or post mortem report is not automatically sent to the family. This has to be purchased and costs S\$123.05 (after GST) at the mortuary. A further toxicology report is available for the same fee. Payment from overseas is only accepted via bank draft.

To apply for an autopsy report:

http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/Applied_Sciences/Forensic_Medicine/e-Services_and_Forms.html

Mortuary Facilities

The mortuary is located at the Centre for Forensic Medicine Mortuary located at Block 9 Singapore General Hospital. The Centre for Forensic Medicine (CFM) of the Health Sciences Authority is the national provider of forensic medical consultancy services in the examination of Coroner's cases. The standards provided and applied are on a par with that provided in the United Kingdom.

Funeral options

Following the death of a British national in Singapore, the next of kin, or their formally appointed representative, must decide whether to

- (a) repatriate the deceased to the UK or
- (b) have a local cremation and repatriate the ashes back to the UK or
- (c) have a local burial or cremation.

The National Environment Agency provides cremation, burial and columbarium services in Singapore. Read more about them at <http://www.nea.gov.sg/public-health/care-for-the-dead/care-for-the-dead-services>

If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, it is important that the Next Of Kin contact the insurance company without delay. If the insurance company grants cover, you should discuss with them what funeral arrangements they will cover, including possible repatriation of the deceased to the UK. If there is no insurance cover, the cost of repatriation, burial or cremation will need to be met by the family. The service of an international undertaker are normally necessary to help with these arrangements as neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Office nor our High Commission in Singapore has budgets to meet these costs.

It is important to remember that if the deceased was travelling with a tour operator, they can be an important source of assistance and advice.

There are a number of Funeral Directors in Singapore who are able to offer a full funeral service including burial and cremation and repatriations to most countries in the world. If a local burial or cremation takes place, there will be no Coroner's inquest carried out in the UK.

A complete list of those in the Association of Funeral Directors of Singapore is available at [http://www.nea.gov.sg/public-health/care-for-the-dead/other-death-related-matters/association-of-funeral-directors-\(singapore\)](http://www.nea.gov.sg/public-health/care-for-the-dead/other-death-related-matters/association-of-funeral-directors-(singapore))

Local Burial

The Choa Chu Kang Cemetery Complex is the only cemetery in Singapore still open for burial. The Complex includes Christian; Muslim; Ahmaddiya Jama'at; Jewish; Parsi; Bahai; Chinese and Hindu Cemeteries. The burial period for all graves is limited to 15 years. At the end of the 15 years, the graves will be exhumed. For those whose religion allows cremation, the exhumed remains will be cremated and stored in columbaria niches. Where compulsory burial is required due to religious reasons, the remains will be re-buried in smaller individual plots.

Local Cremation

There are three crematoria in Singapore – one government-managed crematorium and two private crematoria. The government-managed crematorium is located at Mandai Crematorium and Columbarium Complex and the two private crematoria are located at Kong Meng San, Phor Kark See Monastery and Tse Toh Aum Temple.

Cremated ashes may be stored in columbaria niches. Foreigners cremated in Singapore are not entitled to purchase niches in government - operated columbaria. They may however purchase niches at private columbaria.

Repatriation

It is necessary to appoint a Funeral Director to organise the repatriation of a body from Singapore.

If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, the insurance company will normally have a standing agreement with an International Funeral Director in the UK to arrange repatriation on your behalf. If the deceased is not covered by insurance, the next of kin will need to appoint an international undertaker in the UK. A list of companies is attached at the end of this document (Appendix A).

There are also a number of Funeral Directors in Singapore who also specialise in repatriation and will provide special caskets required for the international carriage of human remains. A list of Funeral Directors who specialise in local funeral arrangements and repatriation can be found at the end of this document (Appendix B).

Registration of the death

In Singapore a body will be released for local burial/repatriation once the medical practitioner has issued a Certifying Cause of Death (CCOD) document. After the CCOD has been issued it will be necessary to register the death at the Police Divisional Headquarters, Neighbourhood Police Centre, Neighbourhood Police Post or the Registry of Births & Deaths located on the 3rd Floor of the ICA Building (Tel: 6391 6100). The informant will need to present the Certificate of Cause of Death and the identification papers of the deceased and the informant. It takes approximately 45 minutes at Neighbourhood Police Centres/Posts to issue the Death Certificate and approximately 30 minutes at Citizen Services Centre, ICA Building.

In the case where an autopsy has been conducted, the CCOD and Death Certificate will be issued by Centre for Forensic Medicine Mortuary.

Full information on the above is available at <http://www.nea.gov.sg/public-health/care-for-the-dead/other-death-related-matters/death-registration>

Deaths of British Nationals overseas are not automatically recorded in the UK, nor is there any obligation for the death to be registered in the UK. However, next of kin may find that there are advantages in doing so: a British consular death registration document will be available and record of death will be held at the General Register Office in the UK.

To register the death from the UK, read the information available at <https://www.gov.uk/register-a-death> , write to us at bmdenquiries@fco.gov.uk or to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Rm K4.9, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH, or call us at Tel: 020 7008 1500 between 10 am and 12 pm Monday to Friday.

Return of Personal Effects

Personal effects are normally returned to the next of kin, or their authorised representative. If the personal effects need to be returned to the UK and the next of kin are not present in Singapore, the Funeral Director will be able to help make arrangements.

Police/Judicial Inquiries

The Singapore police will lead on any case of suspicious death or a death resulting from a road traffic accident. Interviews with witnesses and investigations may also take place before a decision is made as to the cause of death and may cause a delay in the repatriation or burial of the deceased.

Legal Aid

Legal Aid in Singapore is only available to Singaporeans and Permanent Residents who do not admit to a charge and are unable to afford to pay for a lawyer to defend them and is available through the Criminal and Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS). To apply for legal aid the applicant would need to present documentary evidence of their income, savings and assets.

Under certain circumstances, such as a suspicious death, you may want to appoint a lawyer to represent your interests should this be necessary. A list of lawyers and their specialisations can be found at the end of this document (Appendix C).

UK Coroners

If a person who has died in violent, suspicious or unusual circumstances overseas is repatriated to England or Wales, a Coroner must investigate. Coroners are not legally obliged to hold inquests in other cases, even if the next of kin insist on one. However, the Coroner has discretion to hold an inquest in other cases. A Coroner's decision not to hold an inquest in cases where a family has insisted can be taken by the family to a judicial review.

In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) deals with the investigation of all sudden, suspicious, accidental, unexpected and unexplained deaths which occur in Scotland. However, the COPFS does not have the jurisdiction to investigate deaths that occur outside Scotland apart from a few limited circumstances. Broadly, those circumstances include terrorism, cases where the death may have been caused in Scotland but the person died outside Scotland and cases where the death was as a result of murder or culpable homicide caused by another British citizen or subject.

Coroners in Northern Ireland have no jurisdiction for investigating the deaths of persons being returned from abroad. However, next of kin can apply for a judicial review if no inquest is held.

In Jersey the Coroner's role is performed by the Deputy Viscount, in Guernsey by the Attorney General and in the Isle of Man by HM Coroner for Inquests.

Coroners are either medically or legally qualified. Their duties are to enquire into the deaths of those persons whose bodies physically lie in their districts (even if the death did not occur or the injury or cause of death did not arise in their district) in the following circumstances:

- Deaths, which are sudden or unexpected and the cause is not known
- Deaths which are unnatural or violent
- Deaths which occur in prisons.

Coroners are assisted in their enquiries by Coroner's Officers, who are often serving or retired police officers who undertake support and investigative work for the Coroner and provide a link with families. Coroner's Officers can advise the family of a deceased on the Coroner's responsibilities, inquests, post-mortems and death and burial/cremation certificates. Their details can be obtained through the local police.

Coroners – inquests

Coroners may decide to hold a formal hearing, known as an inquest. Inquests are usually held in a court and are open to the public and press. In some public interest cases, such as a death in police custody (even if this occurred abroad), the Coroner may call a jury. In these cases it is the role of the jury to decide on the cause of death. The purpose of the inquest is to confirm the identity of the deceased, the place and date of death and how the cause of death arose, to enable the Coroner to give an official verdict. It is not the Coroner's role to apportion blame for the death.

In most cases the Coroner will "open" the inquest within a few days of the deceased arriving in his/her jurisdiction, and then "adjourn" the proceedings until further information is received from the enquiry abroad. This "opening" is a formality and usually takes only a few minutes. The Coroner only has four questions: that the person has been positively identified; the date; place; and brief circumstances of how they died. This information would normally be provided by the police or the Coroner's Officer; the family would not need to attend unless they wanted to. In normal circumstances the deceased will be released by the Coroner for burial or cremation after this opening.

In many cases there will not be the need for a post-mortem (autopsy) in the UK. This is a decision for the Coroner, but he/she may require one in cases of unnatural/violent death if there has not been one abroad; if he/she is not

confident of the expertise of a post-mortem performed abroad; or if there are identification issues.

In Singapore when the cause of death is not immediately apparent after a coroner's autopsy is conducted, the term "cardiorespiratory failure pending further investigations" is used as a provisional cause of death. This is to facilitate the funeral arrangements or the repatriation of the body. Pending further investigations means that a number of ancillary investigations (tests) will be conducted in order to ascertain the definitive cause of death. The results of the ancillary investigation tests can take up to 3 months and will be made available for a fee prescribed by the Health Sciences Authority Centre for Forensic Medicine
http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/applied_sciences/forensic_medicine/e_services_and_forms.html.

Where the cause of death is not given on the death certificate and if the coroner does not have access to judicial files from other countries then the coroner may order a post-mortem as part of the inquest.

Coroners' enquiries abroad

Sometimes a Coroner may ask for information from the Singapore authorities. This request will be routed through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the British High Commission in Singapore, who will be asked to forward it onto the Singapore authorities. The report, when provided, will then be returned to the Coroner through the same channels.

For further information on inquests please contact your local Coroners Office. Contact details can be found at your local police station.

Compensation

There are no formal Government compensation schemes available, although damages can be claimed from the accused through the courts.

Consular Section
British High Commission Singapore

APPENDIX A

International Funeral Directors in the UK

Funeral Director	Address	Telephone/FAX	e-mail/web address
The Co-Operative Funeralcare	221 Upper Richmond Road London SW15 6SQ 2nd Floor, Hanover Building Hanover Street Manchester M60 0AD	Freephone: 0800 289 120 (Mon-Fri: 0800-1800, Sat: 0900-1200) Fax +44 161 834 0768	funeralplans@letsco-operate.com www.co-operativefuneralcare.co.uk
J H Kenyon Ltd	83 Westbourne Grove London W2 4UL	Freephone: 0800 456 1047 Tel. +44 20 7229 3810 Fax +44 20 7727 2377	www.dignityfunerals.co.uk
Haven Funeral Services (incorporating Haven Repatriation)	13 The Broadway Gunnersbury Lane London W3 8HR	Tel: +44 20 8993 8040 Fax: +44 20 8993 8075	chriswickenden@havenfunerals.com www.havenfunerals.com
Rowland Brothers International	299-305 Whitehorse Rd Croydon CR0 2HR	Tel. +44 20 8684 2324 Fax +44 20 8684 8000	info@rowlandbrothersinternational.co.uk www.rowlandbrothersinternational.co.uk
National Association Of Funeral Directors	618 Warwick Road Solihull B91 1AA	Helpline: 0800 917 3585 Tel. +44 121 711 1343 Fax +44 121 711 1351	info@nafd.org.uk www.nafd.org.uk

Consular Section
British High Commission Singapore

APPENDIX B

List of funeral directors in Singapore

Prepared by British High Commission Singapore

www.gov.uk

The following list of funeral directors has been prepared by the British High Commission Singapore for the convenience of British Nationals who may require this service and assistance in Singapore. It is provided on the understanding that we the British High Commission Singapore do not assume or undertake any legal responsibility, to you, or those affected, if you choose to take it into account when instructing a local funeral director.

Further and alternatively, we cannot accept any liability to any person or company for any financial loss or damage arising from the use of this information or from any failure to give information.

Our aim is to provide our customers with as much relevant information to enable them to make better informed decisions but our lists **are not recommendations and should not be treated as such.**

List of funeral directors in Singapore

Updated: May 2015-06-09

This list is in alphabetical order.

ALL SAINTS Bereavement Care Pte Ltd
35 Kallang Pudding Road #07-13A
Singapore 349314
Tel: (65) 6396 7117, 625 57117
Mobile: (65) 8321 3377
Website: <http://www.allsaintsbereavement.com/>
Email: allsaints@singnet.com.sg

This company has told us the following things:

- they have English speaking staff
- they are not affiliated to any local authority/body
- specialisations are in burial & cremation funeral packages, parlours and tentage, International Repatriation – AITA standard, 24 hour doctor certification, embalming etc
- they have experience of representing British nationals
- staff speak English, Mandarin, Tagalog
- they can offer repayment plans
- Asia and Europe are some of the areas they provide services for

Ang Chin Moh Casket

Blk 88, Geylang Bahru
Singapore 339696
Tel: (65) 6292 4376 (24 hours service)
Website: <http://www.angchinmoh.com.sg/>
Email: enquiry@angchinmoh.com.sg

This company has told us the following things:

- they have English speaking staff
- they are an affiliate company under Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors Group (which also runs Mount Vernon Sanctuary, Western Casket, Algordanza Singapore, Ang Chin Moh Foundation)
- they are a member of International Assistance Group (IAG), FIAT-IFTA, National Funeral Directors Association US (NFDA), Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA)
- they are preferred service provider of many assistance & insurance companies and are able to arrange charter of private jet for affluent families or dignitaries. They are also able to have a consultant to meet client at their convenient location upon first call instead of walk-in to their office
- specialisations are in transfer of mortal remains to their care, embalming service, documentation and administrative, arrangement for flight, ferry, land transport means for repatriation of mortal remains, provision of coffin and flight booking
- they have/do not have experience of representing British nationals
- staff speak English, Mandarin, Bahasa Melay, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, French, Spanish
- they can't offer repayment plans. Mode of payment could be cash/Master/Visa.
- areas/regions of the country they provide services are worldwide

Casket Fairprice Pte Ltd
Blk 37 Sin Ming Drive
#01-569/571
Singapore 575711
Tel: (65) 6455 9909 (24 hours service)
Website: <http://www.casketfairprice.com>

Email: enquiry@casketfairprice.com

This company has told us the following things:

- they have English speaking staff
- they are affiliated to Association of Funeral Directors (Singapore)
- specialisations are in local burial, international repatriation of human remains
- they have/do not have experience of representing British nationals
- staff speak English and local dialects
- they can't offer repayment plans
- areas/regions of the country they provide services are worldwide

Flying Home

Blk 4 Toa Payoh Industrial Park#01-1345A

Singapore 319056

Tel: (65) 6253 0001

Website: <http://www.flyinghome.com/services.html>

Email: enquiry@flyinghome.com

This company has told us the following things:

- they have English speaking staff
- they are an affiliate company under Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors Group (which also runs Mount Vernon Sanctuary, Western Casket, Algordanza Singapore, Ang Chin Moh Foundation)
- they are a member of International Assistance Group (IAG), FIAT-IFTA, National Funeral Directors Association US (NFDA), Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA)
- they are preferred service provider of many assistance & insurance companies and are able to arrange charter of private jet for affluent families or dignitaries. They are also able to have a consultant to meet client at their convenient location upon first call instead of walk-in to their office

- specialisations are in transfer of mortal remains to their care, embalming service, documentation and administrative, arrangement for flight, ferry, land transport means for repatriation of mortal remains, provision of coffin and flight booking
- they have experience of representing British nationals
- staff speak English, Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, French, Spanish
- they can't offer repayment plans. Mode of payment could be cash/Master/Visa.
- areas/regions of the country they provide services are worldwide

Singapore Casket Co. Pte Ltd

131 Lavender Street

Singapore 338737

Tel: (65) 6293 4388 (24 hour service)

Fax: (65) 6296 5993

Website: <http://www.singaporecasket.com.sg/>

Email: customerservice@singaporecasket.com.sg

This company has told us the following things:

- they have English speaking staff
- they are affiliated to Singapore Funeral Association, National Funeral Director Association (USA), Australia Funeral Association
- specialisations are in parlours and all facilities, tentage, caskets and urns, flowers and wreaths, funeral accessories and food catering, hearses and bus transportation, marble inscriptions at columbariums, burial and tombstones, sea burial arrangements, exhumation and worldwide repatriation.
- they have experience of representing British nationals
- staff speak English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and many other local dialects
- they can't offer repayment plans, however, a letter of guarantee from the company or insurance company involved is accepted
- areas/regions of the country they provide services to are worldwide

Consular Section
British High Commission Singapore

APPENDIX C

List of lawyers in Singapore

Prepared by British High Commission Singapore

www.gov.uk

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Further and alternatively, we cannot accept any liability to any person or company for any financial loss or damage arising from the use of this information or from any failure to give information.

Our aim is to provide our customers with as much relevant information to enable them to make better informed decisions but our lists **are not recommendations and should not be treated as such.**

List of lawyers in Singapore

Updated: May 2015
This list is in alphabetical order.

ABRAHAM LOW LLC

24 Raffles Place #07-02 Clifford Centre Singapore 048621

Tel: 6535 6688 Fax: 6534 3606

E-mail: inquiries@abrahamlow.com.sg

Web: www.abrahamlow.com.sg

Employment, tenancy, estate, probate matters and commercial claims. They do not cover criminal law. Operate in English and Mandarin.

ALLEN & GLEDHILL

One Marina Boulevard #28-00 Singapore 018989

Tel: 6890 7188 Fax: 6327 3800

E-mail: enquiries@allenandgledhill.com

Web: www.allenandgledhill.com

Corporate, commercial and finance law. Operate in English, Mandarin, Malay and Bahasa Indonesia.

CONSILIUM LAW CORPORATION

1 Scotts Road, Shaw Centre #16-02 Singapore 228208

Tel: 6235 2700 Fax: 6235 2014

E-mail: info@consiliumlaw.com.sg

Web: www.consiliumlaw.com.sg

Family law and litigation, family and commercial mediation, foreign investment law in ASEAN, corporate, commercial and employment law. Operate in English, French, Italian, Mandarin and Malay.

DONALDSON & BURKINSHAW

24 Raffles Place, #15-00 Clifford Centre Singapore 048621

Tel: 6533 9422 Fax: 6533 7806

E-mail: enquiries@donburk.com.sg

Web: www.donburk.com.sg

Civil commercial, criminal, corporate, conveyancing and intellectual property (trademarks and patents). Undertakes both contentious (i.e. litigation and other forms of dispute resolution like arbitration and mediation) and non-contentious (i.e. advisory and drafting) matters. Operate in English and Chinese, Japanese and Malay

DREW & NAPIER LLC

10 Collyer Quay #10-01 Ocean Financial Centre Singapore 049315

Tel: 6535 0733 Fax: 6535 4906

Email: mail@drewnapier.com

Web: www.drewnapier.com

Operate in English and Mandarin

EAST ASIA LAW CORPORATION

133 New Bridge Road #10-02 Chinatown Point Singapore 059413

Tel: 6323 2565 Fax: 6323 2373

Web: www.ealc.com.sg

Email: kast@ealc.com.sg

Adoption, civil matters, family law, corporate law, criminal law, accident claims, estate matters, Syariah law, personal legal services, conveyancing/property law.

KHATTARWONG LLP

80 Raffles Place #25-01 UOB Plaza 1 Singapore 048624

Tel: 6535 6844 Fax: 6534 4892 After office hours Tel: 9088 8557

Email: kwp@khattarwong.com

Web: www.khattarwong.com

Cover all fields of the law including tax, civil and criminal litigation, insurance, family law, real estate, intellectual property and corporate and commercial law. Operate in English only.

You will find details of all lawyers/advocates in Singapore at:

Law Society of Singapore

39 South Bridge Road Singapore 058673

Tel: 6538 2500 (General Inquiries) Fax: 6533 5700

Email: lawsoc@lawsoc.org.sg

Web: www.lawsociety.org.sg/directory

Web: www.lawsociety.org.sg/probono/need_help.aspx (Pro Bono Services)

Free Legal Clinics for Women**Singapore Council of Women's Organisations**

96 Waterloo Street Singapore 187967

Tel: 6837 0611 Fax: 6837 0081

Email: swco@scwo.org.sg

Web: <http://www.scwo.org.sg/index.php/legal-clinic>

Offers free legal clinic 1st & 3rd Mondays each month, 6.30 pm. to 8.30 pm.

AWARE Centre

Association of Women for Action and Research

Blk 5 Dover Crescent #01-22 Singapore 130005

Tel: 67797137 Fax: 67770318

Helpline: 1800 7745935

Email: aware@aware.org.sg

Web: www.aware.org.sg

Offers free legal clinic, 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month for women.

