



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Bereavement Information for Turkey

Prepared by
British Consular Services Turkey

www.gov.uk/world/turkey

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Introduction	3
Standard Procedures	3
Local Burial, Repatriation, Cremation	3
Donation of Bodies to Medical Science	4
Inquests	5
Post Mortem	5
Police/Judicial Inquiries/Deaths in Suspicious circumstances	6
Release of Information	6
UK Coroners	6
Legal Aid	7
Visiting Mortuary	8
Registration of the Death	8
Return of Personal Effects	8
British Passport Cancellation	9
Compensation	9
Language	9
Tell Us Once	9
Contact Information for Consular Support in Turkey	10
List of Local Undertakers	11
List of International Undertakers in the UK	12

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 distressed 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 Consulates in Turkey 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 some Turkish 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

In Turkey it is not normally necessary for the deceased to be identified by the next of kin. Identification can be carried out by means of documentation such as a passport or driving licence or by fingerprints. In the case of doubt as to the identity of the deceased, a Judge may order DNA testing and/or request information via Police channels from abroad. This process could take up to a few months.

Following the death of a British national in Turkey, 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. 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 our Consulates in Turkey have budgets to meet these costs. If the next of kin is in the UK, they will be able to liaise directly with the local Consulate dealing with the case, informing them of how they wish to proceed with the burial, where they wish this to take place and details of who is taking responsibility for the costs involved.

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

Local Burial, Repatriation, Cremation

You may begin to make funeral arrangements before a post mortem (if relevant) has taken place. A funeral director may be appointed by the family of the deceased, or if there are no next of kin, friends or companions.

If the deceased had travel insurance, you should contact the insurance company as soon as possible. This can significantly reduce the stress on family and friends by providing advice and taking care of most of the arrangements and costs associated with a local funeral or repatriation to the UK. You should be aware that in some cases the insurer might wish to use its preferred funeral directors.

The funeral director will, on the family's behalf, find out when the deceased is likely to be released by the Coroner.

There are Christian cemeteries or sections in Muslim cemeteries in most of the metropolitan cities and some summer resorts. Cost of a casket is not always included within the service of the funeral directors so when making arrangements ensure that you specify that this is required.

Cremation is not legal in Turkey and there are no cremation facilities. Bringing ashes of a loved one to Turkey is also restricted. The ashes can be brought to Turkey if the deceased or immediate family member is a Turkish national. Permission will be granted after the ashes are tested to be non-hazardous and authentic.

The list of international and local funeral directors is available at the end of this document. It is provided on the understanding that we 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. We are unable to recommend a specific funeral director. 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.

Donation of Bodies to Medical Science

In some parts of Turkey there is the possibility of donating your body to medical science after your death. To find out more you need to contact the medical faculty or university hospital in your area. Written consent must be given prior to death. There may be some restrictions to the donation of a body and certain medical conditions may lead to the offer being declined. These conditions and any other reasons for a body donation being declined can be obtained from each medical faculty. In the event that your body cannot be accepted, your family will need to make alternative arrangements.

Inquests

If a death occurs outside of a medical unit and is unexpected, Turkish Police will be involved and will usually, but not always, inform the nearest British Consulate.

When a person dies from a sudden, violent, unnatural death or where the cause of death is not known, the Police will be informed and they will alert the Public Prosecutor who usually calls in a duty doctor. The team of the Public Prosecutor, Police and Doctor have a legal duty to establish:

- a. The manner in which the death arose
- b. The cause of death
- c. The particulars needed to register the death
- d. The identity of the deceased

The Public Prosecutor writes a preliminary post mortem report including details of the incident leading to death and will normally order a post-mortem examination to be carried out.

Please note: If the death is considered as a natural death; i.e. deaths occurring at medical units/hospitals, or where a doctor is able to certify the cause of death because the patient is known to the doctor and has had a long-standing illness, the Police are unlikely to be involved and no further inquest is required.

Post Mortem

In order to establish the exact cause of death; the Public Prosecutor may refer the deceased to forensic units to carry out an post mortem which then enables a post mortem report to be issued. Post-mortems are normally carried out within 24 hours of death, or as soon as possible thereafter. However, you should be aware that reporting processes can be slow and the final cause of death may not be known for over six months as some tests e.g. toxicology tests, may be referred to other forensic centres.

During a post-mortem, all parts of the body are examined to determine the presence, nature and extent of any disease or damage. All organs are removed from the body for examination. Small tissue and blood samples are retained for laboratory analysis and then the organs replaced, care is taken so that the body is returned as far as possible to its original condition.

The Coroner's office in the UK would normally ask for a copy of the final post-mortem report and next of kin may ask for a copy from the Coroner.

Police/Judicial Inquiries/Deaths in Suspicious circumstances

The Turkish Police, on behalf of the Public Prosecutor, investigate all sudden, accidental or suspicious deaths. As well as examining the scene of the death, the police & the Public Prosecutor will take statements from witnesses, family and/or friends of the deceased who are present in Turkey.

When their investigations are complete, the police sends the investigation file to the Court for the attention of the Public Prosecutor in charge. The file normally includes the investigating officer's report, reports from any other officers involved (e.g. road traffic accident investigators), witness statements, and any other relevant evidence such as photographs and/or drawings of the scene of the death.

Next of kin do not automatically receive a copy of the file. However they are entitled to request one – either by making a request whilst giving a statement or by visiting the Court to ask for a copy of the file content or through their legal representative. Consular officials cannot act on behalf of next of kin to request a file and public prosecutors would normally refuse to pass a file to a consular official.

If the police apprehend a suspect in a case of suspicious death, he/she may be remanded in custody whilst the police conduct their investigation. However, this is a decision for the Public Prosecutor.

Release of Information

Access to information concerning a death, other than post-mortem and police reports, is restricted. The Turkish authorities might not provide this information directly to next of kin, or to third parties including our Consulates.

The Consulate can advise you on how to make requests for post-mortem and police reports. If you have a lawyer, they should be able to assist you in obtaining these.

You can view the list of English speaking solicitors on www.gov.uk/government/publications/turkey-list-of-lawyers . The release of any information can take many months, and the documents will be issued in Turkish.

When an inquest in Turkey has been opened, the local authorities will normally not release any related reports before the conclusion of the preliminary investigation.

UK Coroners

The Coroner in England and Wales is obliged in law to hold an inquest into the cause of any unnatural or violent death of a person whose remains physically lie in his or her area, even if the death occurred overseas and a post-mortem has already been carried out before repatriation of the remains to the UK. In some countries the cause of death is not given on the death certificate and Coroners do not generally

have access to judicial files from other countries. Consequently Coroners may order a second post mortem (i.e. subsequent to the first post mortem carried out abroad), as part of the inquest and it is at this stage that families are made aware if organs have been removed and not replaced.

Coroners can request copies of post-mortem and police reports from the Turkish authorities. However, these will only be provided once any judicial proceedings are completed. In some instances this can take many months.

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 in a few limited circumstances. Generally, 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 are not obliged to hold an inquest into cause of death. However, next of kin can apply for a judicial review if no inquest is held.

There will be no Coroner's inquest when the remains are buried or cremated locally.

Legal Aid

Legal aid has been introduced as a requirement of the right to fair trial and it is a principle brought not to be deprived of the right to file a case for those who cannot afford it. In accordance with this principle, individuals who do not have sufficient income are exempt from court fees and expenses and in this case the Bar assigns a lawyer free of charge.

Individuals who cannot afford the trial cost and other expenses partly or completely can receive legal aid provided that they establish an idea that they are right in their claims and defence, requests for temporary legal protection and enforcement proceedings.

Legal aid system does not cover the criminal cases. In criminal cases, the system has been structured differently. You can request legal aid in regular courts (civil courts) and administrative courts when you file a case or when a case is filed against you.

Please follow the link provided below for details of "Legal Aid" in Turkey.

www.hukukiyardim.gov.tr/legal_aid/sayfalar/legalaid.pdf

Visiting Mortuary

The police or the Public Prosecutor may ask a family member or friend of the deceased to view the body for identification purposes before a post-mortem takes place. Or, immediate family members may wish to see the deceased before burial or repatriation takes place. You may ask assistance from the consular officer helping you to arrange a visit to the mortuary.

Mortuary facilities, including storage standards, are similar to those in the UK. There are mortuaries at all major hospitals and forensic departments.

Registration of the Death

Turkish authorities will issue a local death certificate in Turkish and the local documents will be repatriated along with the body. The death certificates issued in Turkey do not give details of the cause of death, as would be the case in the UK. However, in most cases a multi language local Death Certificate (Formul C) issued by local Registry Office (Nufus Dairesi) will be sufficient for pension, inheritance and similar issues.

There is no legal obligation for the death overseas of a British national to be registered in the UK. However, there are the advantages that a British style death certificate is then available and that a record of the death is afterwards held at the General Register Office in the UK. Further information is available on our website: www.gov.uk/register-a-death

Alternatively you can contact:
Overseas Registration Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
PO Box 6255
Milton Keynes
MK10 1XX

Or email deathregistrationenquiries@fco.gov.uk with specific enquiries. A registration cannot, in any case, be made without presenting the death certificate issued by the local authorities.

Return of Personal Effects

Personal effects are listed by the police at the time of the incident and the valuables are taken under the custody of the Probate Court unless immediate next of kin present. The belongings then can be claimed by the legal inheritors through the legal process applied in Turkey. It is generally advised by the Probate Court that families appoint a solicitor to follow all the legal formalities to retain the personal effects.

Some personal effects such as clothing and toiletries are often sent by repatriation companies with the body.

British Passport Cancellation

In order to avoid identity fraud a deceased person's passport should be sent to the nearest British Consulate in Turkey or passport office in the UK for cancellation along with form D01. Next of kin can request the passport to be returned. Likewise if the passport has been lost or mislaid, relatives should get in contact with either the nearest Consulate or passport office for instructions on reporting the loss of the passport.

Compensation

There is a government compensation scheme in terrorism cases which is applicable to foreign nationals as well as local nationals in Turkey. In order to have details on how to make an application, please consult a solicitor.

It is highly advisable to consult a solicitor for details of compensation claims on murder/manslaughter cases.

Language

Please note that the correspondence language for all above processes is Turkish. However you have the right to ask an interpreter at the court and the police station.

Link provided below has the list of translators and interpreters in Turkey in case you may need to appoint one.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/turkey-list-of-translators-and-interpreters

Tell Us Once

Tell Us Once is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go.

Tell Us Once will notify:

- > HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) - to deal with tax and cancel benefits
- > Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) - to cancel benefits, e.g. income support
- > Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) - to cancel a driving licence
- Passport Office - to cancel a passport

- > the local council - to cancel housing benefit, council tax benefit, a Blue Badge, inform council housing services and remove the person from the electoral register

Please visit the following page for more information: www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once

Contact Information for Consular Support in Turkey

British Consulate General, Istanbul

Meşrutiyet Caddesi No 34, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu, İstanbul
Office hours: Monday to Friday, 08:30-13:00, 14:00-16:45
Visiting hours: Monday to Friday, 09:00-12:30

Contact information :

Tel: 0090 212 334 6400
Fax: 0090 212 334 6407
E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

British Embassy, Ankara

Şehit Eran Caddesi 46A, Çankaya, Ankara
Office hours: Monday to Friday: 08:45-13:00, 14:00-17:00
Visiting hours: Monday: 09:00-12:30, Friday: 09:00-12:30

Contact information:

Tel: 0090 312 455 33 44
Fax: 0090 312 455 33 53
E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

British Consulate, Izmir

1442 Sokak No:49 PK 5220 Alsancak Izmir
Office hours: Monday to Friday, 08:45-13:00,14:00- 17:00
Visiting hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 09:00-12:30

Contact information:

Tel: 0090 232 463 5151
Fax: 0090 232 4650858
E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

British Vice Consulate, Antalya

Gürsu Mahallesi Sokak No: 6 Konyaaltı Antalya
Office hours: Monday to Friday, 09:00-13:00, 14:00-17:00
Visiting hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 09:30- 12:30

Contact information:

Tel: 0090 242 228 28 11
Fax: 0090 242 229 21 51
E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

British Honorary Consulate, Bodrum

We have no office in Bodrum but you can arrange to meet our mobile consular official in this town.

Contact information:

Tel: 00 90 252 412 64 88

E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

British Honorary Consulate, Fethiye

Ataturk Caddesi Likya İş Merkezi Kat 2 No:202 48300 Fethiye Muğla

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 08:45 -13:00 and 14:00-17:00

Visiting hours: Monday, Friday 14:00-16:00, Tuesday, Thursday 09:00-12:30

Contact information:

Tel: 00 90 252 614 63 02

Fax: 00 90 252 614 83 94

E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

British Honorary Consulate, Marmaris

C/o Yeşil Marmaris Turizm ve Yat Liman İşletmeciliği A.Ş. Barbaros Caddesi 11, Marina P.O.Box 8, 48700 Marmaris

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 08:45-13:00,14:00-17:00

Visiting hours: Monday, Friday 14:00-16:00, Tuesday, Thursday 09:00-12:30

Contact information:

Tel: 00 90 252 412 64 88

Fax: 00 90 252 412 45 65

E-mail: britembcon@fco.gov.uk

List of Local Undertakers

ANTALYA ASSISTANCE

Address: Tahilpazari Mah. A. Menderes Blv. Gazihan No: 19/21 07040 Antalya
TURKEY

Call Centre : 0090 242 243 62 19

Fax : 0090 242 248 77 24

Web : www.antalya-assistance.com

E-mail : info@antalya-assistance.com

HIZIR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Arapsuyu Mah. 603 Sk. Deniz Apt. No:6/A Konyaalti 07070 Antalya / TURKEY

Call Centre : 0090 242 237 20 30

Fax : 0090 237 67 15

Mobile : 0090 544 544 544 0

Web : www.hizirassistance.com

E-mail : info@hizirassistance.com

DOLUNAY FUNERAL SERVICES

Bahcelievler Mahallesi Bahriye Uçok Caddesi 3/3 Besevler / Cankaya Ankara
TURKEY

Call Centre : 0090 312 432 54 32
Fax : 0090 312 435 84 35
Web : www.cenazedolunay.com
E-mail : bilgi@cenazedolunay.com

BERCKAC ORGANISATION

Istiklal Cad. Tokatliyan Is Hani No: 126/30-36 Galatasaray Istanbul / TURKEY

Tel : 0090 212 252 85 55
Emergency : 0090 532 473 82 57 or 0090 532 431 83 33
Web : www.berckac.com
Email : tamar.kac@berckac.com

ISTANBUL FUNERAL SERVICES

Yali Mah. Istasyon Sok. No:1 Maltepe Istanbul / TURKEY

Tel : 0090 212 231 11 44
Web : www.istanbulcenaze.com
Email : istanbulcenaze@gmail.com

VAHAN CIVANYAN FUNERAL SERVICES

Kurtulus Cad. No:67 D:5 Sisli Duatepe 34400 Istanbul / TURKEY

Tel : 0090 212 232 57 01
Emergency : 0090 536 323 48 48
Email : vahanc@gmail.com

List of International Undertakers in the UK

Please go to the following page for the list of International Undertakers in the UK

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596745/International_Funeral_Directors_list.pdf