

Bereavement Information Pack:

Guidance for Next of Kin

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Death Information Sheet: Guidance for Next of Kin

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 you may be 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 Consulate in Quito are ready to help as far as we can. You may be uncertain about what to do next or who to contact for advice.

This information is designed to help you through the practical arrangements you will need to make. You should be aware that Ecuadorean procedures differ significantly to those in the United Kingdom and that it is not always possible for arrangements to be made quickly.

This booklet is up to date, but the British Embassy is not accountable for any errors or omissions in the information provided.

WHAT STEPS HAVE TO BE TAKEN WHEN A PERSON DIES IN ECUADOR?

All the procedures explained in this document can be bureaucratic. All the necessary paperwork before you arrange a burial, cremation or repatriation has to be ready. We can give you advice and provide you with a [list of local undertakers](#).

However, once you have designated a local undertaker to make arrangements on your behalf, they will be in charge of obtaining all the required paperwork based on your instructions. This will involve sending an authorisation either directly to them, or through the British Embassy in Quito. A copy of your passport should be attached to the authorisation letter.

If there is an insurance policy in place, the UK insurance company and designated UK funeral home will instruct the local undertaker and will co-ordinate the relevant payment. We may be able to oversee some basic arrangements.

If there is no insurance cover, funds for repatriation or burial will need to be met by the family. Neither the British Embassy or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London have budgets to meet these costs.

LOCAL DEATH CERTIFICATE

A medical certificate certifying the death is issued by a local legal doctor. All deaths will be registered by the [Ecuadorean Civil Registry Office](#). A certified copy is usually issued immediately if all necessary details are available. The certificate costs around \$6 and states the date of death, place of death and cause of death. Further copies can be applied for as needed. The process for applying for a certificate is as follows: an immediate family member (usually spouse or parent only) can request a copy from the Civil Registry Office in person, giving the full name and date of birth of the deceased, and showing their own identity document. No other documentation such as marriage or birth certificates is usually requested. If someone other than the spouse or parent wishes to request a copy, this can be done by following the same procedure, but they will be asked to fill out an additional request form at the Civil Registry Office.

If the family wishes to apply for a death certificate from the UK, they should contact the Ecuadorean Consulate in London (tel: 0207 451 0040, website address: <http://londres.consulado.gob.ec/contactos/>). They may need to book an appointment and attend in person.

It is possible to register in the UK the death of a British national who has died in Ecuador. This service carries a statutory fee for the registration and an extra fee if a copy of the death registration certificate is required. Find [here](#) more information about the registration process with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The British Embassy in Quito is no longer involved in this process.

The British death registration certificate should not be obligatory for any procedures in the UK. An Ecuadorean death certificate should be internationally recognised and valid in the UK, but you may want to get it translated into English.

AUTOPSY

Under Ecuadorean law, an autopsy is obligatory if a person dies in sudden or violent circumstances (this is not to be confused with the rules around cremation described further on – in some cases an autopsy will be performed, but no further investigation is required after that, so a cremation CAN still be performed in these circumstances). The judicial police pathologists are responsible for carrying out autopsies. If a person dies in hospital, or from an illness lasting more than 24 hours, an autopsy is not obligatory.

Documentation/processes necessary for autopsy

(your chosen funeral home in Ecuador should arrange this documentation):

- a. Medical Death certificate, issued by a doctor
- b. Certificate of identification of the deceased person, issued by the judicial police and the district prosecutor (Fiscalia) (for violent and/or sudden death)
- c. Medical (Autopsy) Legal Report, issued by an official police/prosecutor doctor
- d. Autopsy report (if applicable)
- e. Registration of Death Certificate at the Ecuadorean Civil Registry Office (Registro Civil)

EMBALMING

Most funeral directors in Quito and Guayaquil provide an embalming service to preserve the body before repatriation.

This cost is already included in other funeral arrangements.

Documentation/processes necessary for embalming:

(your chosen funeral home in Ecuador should arrange this documentation):

- f. Medical Death certificate, issued by a doctor
- g. Registration of Death Certificate from the Ecuadorian Registry Office
- h. Certificate of identification of body (if applicable)
- i. Autopsy report (if applicable)
- j. Issue of "Formolisation" Certificate for the preservation of the body issued by the Ministry of Health/District Prosecutor's doctor and/or police pathologist.

Deceased at a hospital/medical facility: Issue of death certificate

Deceased outside a hospital/medical facility: the judicial police pathologists must undertake

an autopsy in order to establish the cause of death, and are also responsible for carrying out the preservation of the body.

WHAT OPTIONS EXIST FOR THE FAMILY OF A PERSON DECEASED IN ECUADOR?

The below points provide information on the options available to the family of a person deceased in Ecuador, i.e. cremation, burial or full body repatriation.

1. CREMATION

Cremation costs around US\$800 to US\$900 (including the cost of the coffin, transportation from the funeral home to the crematorium and all paperwork)

Documentation/processes necessary for cremation:

(your chosen funeral home in Ecuador should arrange this documentation)

- a. Issue of Medical Death certificate by a doctor¹
- b. Registration of Death Certificate at the Registry Office
- c. Certificate of identification of remains (if applicable)
- d. Autopsy report (if applicable)
- e. Cremation authorisation from Next of Kin
- f. Issue of Cremation Permission by the Ministry of Health (Dirección Provincial de Salud) to local undertaker, stating where it will take place.
- g. Cremation Certificate

Under Ecuadorean law, cremation is not legally allowed if the death occurred in violent circumstances, such as a murder, overdose or suicide. This is because legal investigations into the death are required. This may also apply to death from road accidents or other forms of accident, where the local authorities deem it necessary to conduct further investigation, and/or begin a legal procedure against another involved party (such as another driver). Therefore in these situations, the only options are for the body to be repatriated, or a local burial.

2. REPATRIATION OF ASHES / FULL BODY

Funeral directors can organise the repatriation of ashes, or full body, to the UK or another country.

The cost of **cremation and transportation of ashes back to the UK** is about US\$800 – US\$1000 **in addition to the cost of the cremation service detailed above** (with all paperwork, but excluding airfare). Approximate airfare: US\$480 – 500.

In some cases it is possible for family members to travel with the ashes as hand luggage, rather than cargo (in which case the above airfare cost does not apply). This must be requested directly to the funeral director. It is important to note that the funeral director will need full details of the family's planned itinerary including any transit stops, in order to arrange the necessary paperwork. Ashes are provided in a sealed urn with necessary paperwork for travel.

¹ "Informe Estadístico de Defunción" – INEC's form

The cost of **preparing and transporting a body to the UK** is about US\$3000 - \$3,500 (with all paperwork, but excluding airfare. Approximate airfare: US\$19.80 per kilo (average coffin's weight is 180-200 kg). Some funeral directors have a maximum weight limit of around 200kg for a body / 12kg for ashes.

It is worth noting that **repatriation airfare can vary greatly by airline**, and it depends on availability and notice given before the flight is booked. Therefore it is worth requesting the funeral home to obtain quotes from various airlines (2 or 3 minimum) and requesting to see the final quotes before making a decision. If the family has some flexibility on dates for the repatriation, this can also help reduce expense, as costs can vary on a day to day basis even with the same airline.

If you choose to repatriate a body to the UK, you must be aware that under Ecuadorean law all organs must be removed, treated and returned to the body before it can be repatriated to another country. We understand that this can be distressing for families, but we are unable to interfere with Ecuadorean law on this matter. However, we have learnt from recent cases that some undertakers in Guayaquil are not obliged to follow this process.

Documentation/processes necessary for repatriation of ashes/dead body
(your chosen funeral home in Ecuador should arrange this documentation):

Apart from other documents listed above:

- a. Certificate of removal of organs and embalming process
- b. Permission Certificate for repatriation of ashes/body, issued by the Epidemiology Department of the Ministry of Health (Dirección Provincial de Salud) to the assigned airline and local undertaker. This document should include a basic flight itinerary.
- c. "Formolisation" Certificate for the preservation of remains issued by the Ministry of Health/District Prosecutor's doctor and/or police pathologist.
- d. Certificate from local undertaker stating that the coffin containing ashes/body complies with health regulations: special hermetically sealed coffin (inner metal-casket and external wooden-container) is required for repatriation of a body. In addition, the local undertaker needs to certify that an embalming and "formolisation" procedures have been done, and that the coffin does not contain any drugs, weapons or explosives.
- e. Air waybill issued by airline
- f. All corresponding documents for repatriation are verified by the International Health Department, Customs and the Anti-Narcotics department at the airport.

3. LOCAL BURIAL

Above ground concrete container (locally known as "niche") burial costs around US\$2000. Graveyard burial costs around US\$2000 - \$3000. Please note these costs can vary a lot by funeral director and facilities offered.

Documentation/processes necessary for burial
(your local undertaker should arrange this documentation):

- a. Issue of Medical Death certificate by a doctor
- b. Registration of Death Certificate at the Registry Office
- c. Certificate of identification of the deceased person (if applicable)

- d. Issue of “Formolisation” (embalming) Certificate for the preservation of remains by the Ministry of Health
- e. Issue of Burial authorisation by the Ministry of Health (Dirección Provincial de Salud). If deceased in a small village, authorisation to be issued by the head of the medical centre.

Additional information: If a bereaved family does not have funds for a local burial, an undertaker in Quito called ‘Sociedad Funeraria Nacional’ may be able to provide space for burial in San Diego cemetery for a period of approximately of 3 years. The undertaker called ‘Junta de Beneficiencia de Guayaquil’ has a similar system in place in Guayaquil.

4. FUNERAL SERVICE / VIGIL

Costs for a **funeral service**, including a vigil in the funeral home’s chapel of rest for up to 24 hours (open for family members to come and go, often accompanied by refreshment service) are around \$800 - \$1500, but **this can vary considerably by funeral home and depending on the level of facilities offered.**

This cost includes embalming/body preparation prior to the service.

Please note these costs are in addition to the below costs for cremation/burial/repatriation following the funeral service.

Most funeral homes are flexible with the type of funeral service offered and will listen to the family’s wishes in terms of a religious/non-religious service.

If family members wish for the deceased to be dressed in particular clothes, or for certain items of sentimental value to be placed with them in the coffin, this is usually possible and must be discussed with the funeral home.

Families can choose to have an open or closed-casket vigil/memorial service.

FURTHER INFORMATION

LOCAL POLICE / JUDICIAL INQUIRIES

Investigative action is taken following a **death in suspicious circumstances, death from a road traffic accident and in some cases of sudden/accidental or violent death.** The investigation is led by the examining prosecutor, but supported by the judicial police (and SIAT – traffic accidents investigation police). Police may make a copy of their report available to the family, upon request.

Brief description of the judicial process if the police apprehend a suspect and the State decides to prosecute:

- a. Inquiry phase handled by the judicial police, but under the control of the state/district prosecutor. Confidential inquiries within the first 24-48 hours – no public access.
- b. If evidence found, the state prosecutor will lead a 90-day investigation phase (45 days for road traffic accidents). Inquiries within this period are delegated to the district judicial police. Public access.
- c. After this period, the prosecutor must announce judgment (to accuse or to dismiss)
- d. If a suspect is accused, a preliminary hearing should take place before the judge
- e. Judge to give verdict
- f. If a trial is called by the judge, the court hearing should take place before the designated court

- g. Court to submit sentence

Legal Aid

If it is a public accusation, the state prosecutor will be in charge of the inquiry/investigation of the case.

“Pro Bono” lawyers ([Public Defendants](#)) may be only available for criminal cases.

For private allegations, the Consular Section of the British Embassy has available a [list of local English-speaking lawyers](#), which you would have to pay for.

UK CORONER INQUEST

When a body is repatriated to England or Wales from Ecuador, the police will only hold an inquest if the death was violent or unnatural or if the death was sudden and the cause unknown. A UK coroner may order a post mortem as part of the inquest (even if a post mortem has already been carried out in Ecuador). The UK coroner would not have access to the Ecuadorean judicial file. The UK coroner may however request a copy of the Ecuadorean police and post mortem reports through the FCO’s Consular Directorate. However these reports will only be provided once the judicial processes (if any) had been completed. In some cases this can take several months.

COMPENSATION

Accusations of negligence by a state entity - requesting compensation amount for damages². Next of Kin of the deceased can apply for government compensation:

- a. Civil lawsuit (including legal deposition) against the national company (legal representative) to be submitted to the district Judge by a lawyer on behalf of victim’s Next of Kin. You must first grant a power of attorney to your appointed lawyer.
- b. It is essential to have enough evidence. The amount paid for damages is up to the judge’s discretion.
- c. Judgment – acceptance of deposition and payment of damages.
- d. Appeal is possible – to be reviewed by the Provincial Court and prosecutor
- e. Likelihood of a settlement agreement

A mandatory “public road accident insurance policy” (**SPPAT** - formerly known as [SOAT](#)) was introduced in 2008. It is an insurance for road accident victims, covering medical expenses (up to US\$3.000); hospital transport expenses of injured people (up to US\$200); disability compensation (up to US\$5.000); death compensation (up to US\$5.000) and funeral expenses (up to US\$400). The SPPAT is a mandatory insurance for any kind of vehicle. This insurance systems therefore guarantee that every road accident victim is provided with immediate medical assistance either in a public or private hospital, without having to pay any deposit, in addition to the above compensation amounts.

² Such as death by electrocution: civil lawsuit against national electrical company for not having put warning signs out.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Organisation	Address	Telephone	Website
Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Consular Directorate	King Charles Street London, SW1A 2AH	+44 (0)20 7008 15000	www.gov.uk
British Embassy Quito – Consular Section	Naciones Unidas and Republica de El Salvador Avenues, Citiplaza Building, 14th floor - Quito	+593 (0)2 397 2200	www.gov.uk/world/ecuador ecuador.consulate@fco.gov.uk
Embassy of Ecuador in London	Flat 3B, 3 Hans Crescent. London, SW1X 0LS	+44 207 590 2501 / +44 207 590 2507	http://reinounido.embajada.gob.ec
Victim Support	Cranmer House, 39 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DZ44	+44 (0)845 3030 900 +44 (0)808 1689 111	www.victimsupport.org.uk
BRAKE, the road safety charity. Provides dedicated support for people bereaved or seriously injured in road crashes.	Brake, PO Box 548 Huddersfield HD1 2XZ	+44 (0)1484 55 9909 Brake Support Helpline: +44 (0)808 800 0401 – Operates weekdays from 10am to 4pm	helpline@brake.org.uk www.brake.org.uk
SAMM UK – Support After Murder & Manslaughter: Provides support for families bereaved by murder or manslaughter, including overseas	Kings Norton Police Station 20 Wharf Road Kings Norton B30 3LT	+44 (0)121 451 1618	www.samm.org.uk info@samm.org.uk (not to be confused with SAMM International, which is a different organisation)
Winston's Wish: Support for bereaved children and their families	Royal Crescent Cheltenham, UK GL50 3DA	Helpline: +44 (0)808 802 0021 General enquiries: +44 (0)1242 515157 Operates Monday to Friday (except bank Holidays) from 9am to 5pm Press Office: 07894 204199 (out of hours only)	http://www.winstonswish.org.uk info@winstonswish.org.uk
CHUMS: Child Bereavement, Trauma and Emotional Wellbeing Service. Support for children,	Wrest Part Enterprise Centre Wrest Park Silsoe Bedfordshire	+44 (0)1525 863924	www.chums.uk.com info@chums.uk.com

young people and their parents/carers	MK45 4HS		
TCF: The Compassionate Friends Peer support for bereaved parents and siblings after the death of a child	14 New King Street, Deptford, London SE8 3HS.	Helpline: +44 (0)345 1232304 NI Helpline: +44 (0)288 778 8016 Open 9:30 – 16:30 (always answered by a bereaved parent)	www.tcf.org.uk helpline@tcf.org.uk
Incorporated Law Society Northern Ireland	96 Victoria St, Belfast, County Antrim, BT1 3GN	+44 (0)289 023 1614 Open 9:00 - 17:00 on weekdays	www.lawsoc-ni.org enquiry@lawsoc-ni.org
Scottish Executive Public Health Policy	St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH11 3XD	+44 (0)131 244 25091	www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk
Legal Services Commission	Berkley Way Viking Business Park Jarrow South Tyneside NE31 1SF	+44 (0) 300 200 2020	www.justice.gov.uk/legal-aid contactcivil@legalaids.gsi.gov.uk
Scottish Legal Aid Central Committee	Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HE	+44 (0)131 226 7061 Open 8:30 – 17:00 on weekdays	www.slab.org.uk general@slab.org.uk

International Funeral Directors in the UK			
Organisation	Address	Telephone	Website
Rowland Brothers International	299-305 Whitehouse Road, Croydon, CR0 2HR	+44 (0)208 684 2324 +44 (0)800 917 3585	Info@rowlandbrothersinternational.co.uk www.rowlandbrothersinternational.co.uk
National Association of Funeral Directors	618 Warwick Road Solihull, B91 1AA	+44 (0)121 711 1343 (0)121 711 1351	info@nafd.org.uk www.nafd.org.uk
Co-Operative Funeral Care International	50 Whitta Road, Manor Park, London E12 5DA	+44 (0)208 788 5303	www.co-operative.coop/funeralcare
Albin International Repatriation	George Alfred Dyer House, 51 Neptune Street, London, SE16 7JP	+44 (0)207 313 6920	info@albininternational.com www.albininternational.com
Haven Repatriation Services	13 The Broadway Gunnersbury Lane, London W3 8HR	+44 (0)208 993 8040 +44 (0)208 993 8075	Info@havenfunerals.com www.havenfunerals.com
<p>Every care has been taken compiling this list. However, neither Her Majesty's Government nor the British Embassy in Quito can act as guarantor of the competence or probity of any particular company, nor can they be held responsible in any way for consequences arising from advice accepted or action initiated.</p>			

Short list of local undertakers in Ecuador

QUITO			
Name	Contact	Telephone / Mobile / Email	Website
Funeraria La Paz	Sebastián Barona - Administration Manager Julio Morales	+593 2 2432 515 / 2431-842 M+ 593 9 9945 6513 M+ 593 9 9427 9361 info@fundepaz.com.ec / sbarona@fundepaz.com.ec gerencia@fundepaz.com.ec	www.fundepaz.com.ec
Funeraria Memorial – Organización Exequial	Christian Montes de Oca – Commercial Manager (English speaker) Margarita Araujo Administrative Manager	+593 2 441 022 / 023 M+593 9 99735 457 cmontesc@organizacionmemorial.com M+593 9 99700 914 maraujo@organizacionmemorial.com	www.organizacionmemorial.com
Funeraria Monteolivo – Camposanto	José Veintimilla	+593 2 2462 005 +593 2 334 1877 jveintimilla@monteolivo.com.ec	www.monteolivo.com.ec
Funeraria Nacional	Jorge Crow - Coordinator of Funeral Services	+593 2 2564-477 / 8 / 9 2444-727 / 3215-829 ext. 700 sfn@funerarianacional.com / coordinacionsff@funerarianacional.com ventas@funerarianacional.com	www.funerarianacional.com/
Jardines del Valle – Casa Girón	Silvana Rodríguez Jenny Peñaherrera Miriam Ordóñez	+593 2 2550-043 / 2550-445 atencionalcliente@jardinesdelvalle.com	www.jardinesdelvalle.com.ec
GUAYAQUIL			
Name	Contact	Telephone / Mobile / Email	Website
Fervacargo Navilexpress Funeral Home	Raul Feraud	+593 4 2290 955 M+593 9 9479 3683 raferaud@fervacargo.com / feraudraul@gmail.com	www.fervacargo.com
Jardines de la Esperanza	Andres Carrera General Manager	+593 04 2595240 M+593 994 008 386 (24 hours) funeraria@jardinesdeesperanza.net	
Funeraria Olivares	Viviana Olivares	+593 4 2300424 +593 4 2306139 M+593 991 401 185 funeraria_olivares@hotmail.com	www.funerariaolivares.com
Funeraria León	Andrea León	+593 4 2311907 M+593 999 880 876 M+593 995 959 180 funerarialeon@hotmail.com	
Junta Beneficencia	Mariela Flores	+593 04 2293 849 / +593 04 232 4060 ext 27 (24 hours)	www.juntadebeneficiencia.org.ec

		Other extensions 272, 273, 274 & 275.	mflores@jbgye.org.ec
Funeraria Santa Marianita (Manta)	Mariana Muñoz	+593 05 2620-605 M+593 9 9744 1178 +593 05 263 6663 (Portoviejo)	mariani2050@hotmail.com
<p>Every care has been taken compiling this list of Funeral Directors. However, neither Her Majesty's Government nor the British Embassy in Quito can act as guarantor of the competence or probity of any particular company, nor can they be held responsible in any way for consequences arising from advice accepted or action initiated.</p>			

Consular Section
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