

Advice on Bringing a Deceased Person's Body to Ireland for Burial or Cremation
(in co-operation with Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, Eire)
Edited by BritsinCrete team for the region of Greece and Crete

Introduction/Basic Information on Formalities

In the unlikely occurrence when abroad of a friend or relative who is an Irish citizen with whom you are travelling, suddenly dies, what will you do? It is an awesome task for many, unprepared and an emotional time. The Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin has drawn up a basic guide as to the procedures that need to be followed.

When someone dies abroad, particularly if the death was sudden or unexpected, it is often difficult to know how to deal with the practical matters you need to address. Every country has its own rules about the formalities to be followed when someone dies. The purpose of the following information guides you on how to repatriate and bring a body back to Ireland for burial or cremation. To bring remains to the Republic of Ireland from abroad can be a costly and complicated process. You may therefore wish to consider having the body cremated abroad and having the ashes returned to Ireland.

How to Notify the Irish Authorities that an Irish citizen has died abroad?

If the death of an Irish citizen is notified to the Irish embassy or consulate abroad (click here for contact details of the Irish consulate in Heraklion and Irish Embassy in Athens), the Garda Síochána in Ireland are asked to notify any family/next-of kin in Ireland. The embassy/consulate can also help communicate with the police or other authorities abroad.

If you are in Ireland and have been notified of the death of an Irish citizen abroad by a tour operator or by someone else, then you should contact the Irish embassy/consulate for that country for advice. In the case of Greece, contact details of the Greek Embassy in Dublin here.

How Do I Arrange Formal Identification of the Mortal Remains of an Irish Person?

Before any arrangements can be made to return a body of an Irish citizen to Ireland, it will be necessary to have the remains formally identified. That is, it is necessary to have the identity of the deceased officially confirmed in accordance with the laws in Greece. The rules on who may formally identify a deceased person can vary, but usually identification may be carried out by a travelling companion or business colleague of the deceased. Depending on local laws and rules however, it may be necessary for a family member to travel to the place where the deceased is, to confirm the identity. The Irish Embassy in Athens or Consulate in Heraklion can give best advice, or the appointed Crete/Greek Funeral Director. The latter would normally handle this with the local office of registration of deaths. The Irish consular staff in Greece may assist in obtaining documents such as a death certificate and medical reports. But the Irish Government clearly states it cannot help pay for the cost of relatives travelling to where a death occurs. Neither can the embassy pay the costs of repatriation of bodies back to Ireland except in exceptional circumstances.

How Do I Appoint a Funeral Director?

In order to obtain the release of the body for repatriation from the authorities in Greece (or another country where the person died), you should appoint a funeral director/undertaker. A funeral director is someone whose business is to prepare the dead for burial and to arrange and manage funerals. Services of funeral directors are not free so you should check fees and costs associated prior to engaging those services. The Diplomatic staff can recommend a local undertaker who has handled deceased foreign citizens previously and conversant with travel arrangements and legal requirements. Again, if the death occurred on a package holiday, the tour operator should be able to help with arrangements.

If you live in Ireland and contact a funeral director locally, your funeral director in Ireland can find a suitable funeral director in this case, Greece, and make the appropriate arrangements.

The local funeral director in Greece or elsewhere, can prepare the body for repatriation. The funeral director can also prepare the appropriate documentation and obtain the death certificate if possible. The local funeral director makes all the necessary flight arrangements.

Before Repatriation of a Deceased Person to Southern Ireland is Clearance First Required by Ireland's Authorities?

The repatriation of a body to Ireland must be notified to the coroner in Ireland for the district where the body is being flown to. If you have appointed a funeral director in Ireland, the funeral director will contact the appropriate coroner with the required documentation. Usually, bodies being repatriated to Ireland are flown to Dublin airport. In that case, it is the Dublin County Coroner who must be notified. The appropriate documentation in relation to the deceased has to be

made available to the coroner for clearance by the coroner's office. The documentation required includes

- * Medical certificate giving cause of death
- * Certification as to whether a post-mortem examination has been carried out or not
- * Authorisation to remove the body from the other country
- * Certificate to the effect that the body is not coming from an area of infectious disease

Where there are some concerns as to the circumstances of the death, the coroner may direct that an examination of the body be carried out.

When to Arrange the Funeral Back Home in Ireland?

Funeral arrangements in Ireland should not be confirmed until the coroner's office has cleared the documentation. International regulations (Article 3 of the League of Nations International Regulations concerning the conveyance of corpses, 1937 and the Council of Europe Agreement on the Transfer of Corpses 1973) require all coffins crossing international frontiers by air or sea to be metal (zinc or lead) lined and sealed. These coffins are therefore not suitable for cremation and either the lining has to be removed or another coffin provided if the body is to be cremated in Ireland.

Do I have to Register the Death Both in Ireland and Greece? (or another country if it applies)

If the death is registered say in Greece, it is not normally registered in Ireland. Where a system of registration does not exist in that country or where it is not possible to obtain copies of the relevant civil registration record (death certificate), you should contact the General Register Office in Ireland to see if the death can be registered in Ireland.

A death certificate is an important legal document, evidence of which is frequently required in Ireland in order to deal with the deceased's estate, access money, etc.

What if the Deceased Person is a Resident of Ireland but not a Citizen?

The advice in this document applies exclusively to rules governed by Irish Government Regulation on Human Remains repatriation for citizens of ÉIRE, the Republic of Ireland, and as applied to other EU Nationals with residence in the republic. Residents of Northern Ireland should refer to the UK regulations.

While Irish embassies provide consular services to Irish nationals abroad, this does not extend to non-EU nationals. Nationals of other countries should avail of consular services from their own countries' embassies and consulates.

What is the Cost of Getting a Deceased Person Back to Ireland

Repatriation of a deceased person to Ireland can be very expensive, depending on the distance to be travelled and other factors. Check whether the person had travel insurance or private medical cover to help cover or defray the costs. Financial assistance for the cost of repatriation of a dead body is not available from the Irish embassy. The Irish Association of Funeral Directors in Dublin is a helpful resource centre.

Important Contacts in Ireland

Funeral Directors:

Irish Association of Funeral Directors
Mespil Business Centre
Mespil House
Sussex Road
Dublin 4
ÉIRE

Freephone: 1-800-927111 (local call rates in Ireland)

Email: info@funeralnet.ie

Coroner's Office

Dublin County Coroner
Bella Vista
21 Summerhill
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin
Dublin
IRELAND

Tel: +353 1 230 1774

Email: info@futurenetservices.com

Death Registration in ÉIRE

General Register Office
Government Offices
Convent Road
Roscommon
Roscommon
IRELAND
Tel: +353 90 663 2900
Locall: 1 890 25 20 76
Fax: +353 90 663 2999
Web site : <http://www.groireland.ie/>

HelpDesk at Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin

Consular Services
Department of Foreign Affairs
Hainault House
69-71 St. Stephens Green
Dublin 2
IRELAND

Tel: +353 (0)1 4780822 or +353 (0)1 4780822
Web site: <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=301>
E-mail: consular@dfa.ie

This document on information to repatriate a deceased Irish Citizen back to the Republic of Ireland, is brought you by the [BritsinCrete website](#), the useful resource for anyone in the British Isles who wishes to live abroad, with focus on Living in Crete and Living in Greece. The document has been customized for those Irish citizens who find themselves in Greece/Crete during the demise of an Irish friend or relative they are accompanying.

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