

INFORMATION ON FUNERAL AND MORTUARY SERVICES IN GHANA AND REPATRIATION OF REMAINS TO THE UNITED STATES

The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile these data. The laws cited are from the national law of Ghana.

Part I.

Name of Country: Republic of Ghana

Part II. U.S. Embassy or Consulate Information

Name of U.S. Embassy or Consulate: U.S. Embassy Accra

Address: U.S. Embassy, Accra
24 Fourth Circular Road
Accra, Ghana

Phone: +233 30-274-1000

Fax: +233 30-274-1362

After Hours Phone: +233 30-274-1000

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in the Host Country:

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy at Accra assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

Godson King Akpalu
King's Packing and Services, Ltd.
P.O. Box 414, Trade Fair Centre
Accra, Ghana
Tel: +233-20-818-2369
E-mail: kingspacking@yahoo.com

Joe Quarcoo
Ridge Cremation and Funeral Services

P. O. BOX LT 720, Laterbiokorshie
Accra, Ghana
Tel: +233-27-757-6488
Website: <http://www.ridgecremate.com/cremation-ghana.html>
E-mail: joeqcoo@yahoo.com

Gilman & Abbey Funeral Services Ltd.
Phone: +233-30-223-6036; +233-030-2-30-3651

Ebenezer Funeral Home
General Enquiries: +233-21-850-369
E-mail: efpa@4u.com.gh
info@ebenezerfuneralparlour.com

Lashibi Funeral Homes and Crematorium
Phone: +233-27-561-746/+233-27561-749;
<http://www.lashibifuneralhomes.com>

Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains:

- a. The funeral directors/homes listed above offer very professional services, and are able to expedite repatriation of remains. These funeral directors handle embalming, processing of death certificates, cremation, purchasing of caskets, dressing of deceased, purchasing of vaults (if the deceased is to be buried in Ghana) liaising with overseas funeral homes, travel/ticketing arrangements, etc. King's Packing and Ridge and Cremation Funeral Services are the main providers of complete funeral services for repatriation.
- b. Other funeral providers include Gilman & Abbey, Ebenezer Funeral Home, and Lashibi Funeral Homes that offer caskets, state of the art storage facilities, in-house chapels, and hearses (ambulance service).
- c. In Accra, remains are stored at the Korlebu hospital morgue or 37 Military Hospital morgues, which have a capacity of 500 people. Ebenezer, Gilman & Abbey and Lashibi Funeral Homes also store and preserve processed post mortem bodies from the above registered approved hospitals in ultra-modern refrigerators. The cost of embalming is approximately **\$300-\$600** but may be higher if for shipment to the U.S. (please see below).
- d. Autopsy (post mortem) for foreign nationals is **\$500-1,000**. Pathologists and mortuary managers are available on a limited schedule with pathologists on rotating schedules at the major hospitals. Even if an autopsy is ordered by the police and the coroner's office, an autopsy fee is considered a private expense to be covered by the family.

- e. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Hospital, mortuary, and autopsy fees must be paid for the remains to be released to the deceased's family or a funeral director for burial or repatriation. Without the release of the remains, no local death certificate will be issued and the remains will remain at the mortuary until the next mass burial. The deceased's family, funeral director or appointed representative is responsible for obtaining and providing the U.S. Embassy with a local death certificate (stating the cause of death), which is necessary for issuing a U.S. Consular Report of Death Abroad (CRODA). Without a local death certificate, a CRODA cannot be issued. (Please see below on how to obtain a CRODA.)

Facts related to embalming, cremation, caskets etc.

In the case of infectious diseases, the coroner and the Metropolitan Health Unit of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly will determine whether the remains of the deceased can be repatriated. In most cases where a death occurred at a medical facility or with an attending physician an autopsy is not performed, and the body is washed thoroughly to ensure the disease is not contagious. In the case of a sudden and unattended (by a medical professional) death, the police are informed and proceed with their investigations, and an autopsy will most likely be ordered. In most cases, it is not necessary for the remains to stay in the country after the autopsy.

- f. There are several domestic airlines to transport remains in country, and daily international flights to the U.S. Flight connections/routing are fairly easy to schedule.
- g. Presently, there is no regulatory body with which morticians are registered. The Government of Ghana is working on a policy as well as a bill that will be passed into law to regulate morticians and funerals in Ghana.
- h. The local authorities responsible for making findings regarding the cause of death are the pathologist and coroner. Local death certificates are issued by the birth and death registry.
 - (1) Maximum period Before Burial of Remains: 48 hours if body is not embalmed (this is rarely if ever enforced in cases involving foreign nationals and bodies can remain in mortuary facilities until decided upon by local authorities).
 - (2) Embalming; embalming is usually done a few hours after receipt of the medical cause of death (within 8 hours)
 - (3) Cremation;
 - (4) Caskets and Containers;
 - (5) Exportation of Human Remains;

- (6) Exportation of Human Cremains/Ashes;
- (7) Costs: Charges are based on the exchange rate of: \$1.00 = 4.5 GHC (local currency subject to change);

ESTIMATED COSTS (PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE ONLY BALLPARK FIGURES AND THE ACTUAL COSTS BASED ON INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WISHES AND INPUT MAY DIFFER.

Burial/Cremation in Ghana

Preparation of remains and burial of the deceased in Accra including mortuary fees, space for burial, transportation, documentation and labor = **\$4,000- \$5000** (depending on input).

Preparation of remains, mortuary fees, transportation, documentation, cremation, collection of ashes and disposition in Ghana = **\$3,000 - \$4,000** (depending on input)

Shipment of Remains to the United States

Preparation of remains, mortuary fees, transportation, documentation, undertaking and forwarding of the body to U.S.A = **\$4,000 - \$6,000** (depending on input) **plus air-freight charges**

Air-freight charges Accra - U.S.: **\$2,500 - \$3,500** depending on weight of the body and airline available.

Shipment of Ashes to the U.S.: **\$400 - \$600**

Embalment for export: **\$800 - \$1,500** (depending on input).

Exhumation and Shipment to the U.S.: **\$4,000 - \$6,000** (depending on input) **plus air freight;**

Obtaining a U.S. Consular Report of Death Abroad (CRODA) from the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana

In order to complete the Consular Report of Death Abroad of a U.S. citizen we will need their U.S. passport, the official Ghana death certificate and any other documents related to the person's death (such as but not limited to mortuary receipts, burial permit, hospital records, medical cause of death form, etc.). We will need the name, address and telephone number of the next of kin (spouse, children, etc.).

To help us communicate and carry out your instructions, we ask that you fill out the Next-of-Kin Affidavit to appoint the person who will be acting on your and all Next-of-Kin behalf. The affidavit is available at the State Department website at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/113571.pdf>. We ask that you return its signed and notarized copy to us via email to ACSAccra@state.gov, with the notarized original being mailed to:

U.S. Embassy Accra
ATTN: American Citizen Services (ACS)
Consular Section - ACS
2020 Accra Place
Dulles, VA 20521-2020

Obtaining the Official Ghana Death Certificate from a Local Registry

In Ghana, under Ghana law Act 301, section 20(2), once the cause of death has been determined and documented, a local Registry office issues a death certificate to "*the person responsible for the disposal of the body.*" Only one original is issued.

Once death is registered and a local death certificate issued, other relatives may apply for a copy of that death certificate but such a copy would not state the cause of death without the Registrar's written authorization or the High Court's order. If an institution wants to apply for a copy of the death certificate it must do so through its legal department or its legal representative. The U.S. Embassy is unable to obtain a local death certificate or a copy thereof from the Registry. The Embassy is thus relying on a relative or a funeral home director appointed by the Next-of-Kin to bring a local death certificate in order to issue a CRODA.

In circumstances where the death occurred outside a medical facility or with no physician present, an autopsy is usually required to determine the cause of death. Under Act 301, "where a death was the result of any of the circumstances in which a coroner is required... to hold an inquiry or conduct a post-mortem examination, the Registrar shall neither register the death nor issue a death certificate unless ordered to do so by a coroner." Furthermore, under section 19 (1): "When an inquiry is held on any dead body, the coroner who holds the inquiry shall forthwith complete and sign a certificate stating the cause of the death and the certificate shall forthwith be delivered to the Registrar." In those cases, the coroner's report and authorization need to be obtained prior to the release of the remains for burial or repatriation.

If you have questions about obtaining a CRODA or a local death certificate, please contact us at ACSAccra@state.gov.