

UNCLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM

TO: Department of State (CA/OCS/ACS/EAP)

FROM: AmEmbassy Rangoon

TAGS: CASC

SUBJECT: DEATH: Disposition of Remains Report

REF: [7 FAM 260](#)

The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile this data.

Part I. Name of Country

Burma

Part II. U.S. Embassy Information

Embassy of the United States of America
110 University Avenue
Kamayut Township
Rangoon, Burma 11041
Tel: +95 – 1- 7536 509
Fax: +95 1-7512 124

[Country Specific Information](#)

[State Department Travel Information](#)

[Register with the U.S. Embassy](#)

Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.

Please consult the Burma Country Profile on the [State Department's website](#).

Burma is a country of approximately 56 million people. A multitude of ethnic groups populate the country, the majority being Burman (68%). Other major ethnicities include Shan (9%),

Karen (7%), Rakhine (4%), Chinese (3%), Mon (2%), and Indian (2%). Nearly 90 % of Burmese are Buddhist. Christians (4% total – Baptist 3%, Roman Catholic 1%), Muslims (4%) and animists (1%) are in much smaller numbers.

Rangoon has Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Protestant, Pentecostal, Latter-Day Saints, Armenian, and Seventh-day Adventist churches, a Jewish synagogue, Muslim mosques, and a Jehovah's Witness Assembly Hall. English services are conducted regularly. There is a nondenominational international Christian group that meets at Bishop Court (4th Floor) on Pyitaungsu Road in Ahlone township. Services are conducted in English. There are also numerous Buddhist meditation centers (some of which are popular with foreigners and offer instruction in English), Sikh temples, and Hindu temples.

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

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Rangoon, Burma 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.

AsiaOne International Repatriation

c/o Unlimited Express (Myanmar Co. Ltd)
Room 1003 10th floor Yuzana Condo Tower
No 69 Shwe Gone Daing Rd
Bahan Township, Rangoon
Mr. Mac Loh - Tel: +65-96313729
Mr. San Lin - Tel: +95-9-5112152
Office Tel: +95-1-558660
Fax: +95-1-558664
Email: info@asiaonemyanmar.com
Website: www.asiaone-thf.com

SOS International Clinic

Inya Lake Hotel
37 Kaba Aye Pagoda Road
Mayangone Township, Rangoon
Tel: +95-1-657922, +95-9-420114536, +95-1-657940 (for members and emergencies)
Email: YGN@internationalsos.com
Website: <https://www.internationalsos.com/locations/asia-pacific/myanmar>

Yangon General Hospital Mortuary

Bogyoke Road between Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road and Lanmadaw Road
Located inside the Yangon General Hospital Compound
Latha Township, Rangoon
Tel: +95-1-379868

Yayway Christian Cemetary

Inn Wa Street (South of the Royal Mingalardon Golf and Country Club)
North Okkalapa Township, Rangoon
Tel: +95-1-701123, +95-9-73167881, +95-9-695701123
Contact: Mr. Tun Aung Kyaw, Mr. Soe Win Naing

YMCA

No 263 Mahabandoola Street
Botataung Township, Rangoon
Tel: +95-1-294109, +95-1-294128, +95-1-203027
Fax: +95-1-295848
Email: yangonymca@myanmar.com.mm; yangonymca@mptmail.net.mm

Part V. Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains

NOTE TO READERS: All prices listed in this document are subject to change. Please confirm prices with the service providers listed.

1. Maximum Period Before Burial of Remains:

Burmese Law does not stipulate the maximum duration that a corpse may be left unburied; local health and police officials make case-by-case determinations. Ordinarily, disposition of remains should be addressed as soon as possible. If necessary, disposition can be delayed up to 72 hours after death if the body can be refrigerated (not available everywhere). Embalming generally makes it possible to delay disposing of a corpse until a week after death. If a significant time elapses before a corpse is refrigerated, health and police officials usually ask for early disposition. In Rangoon, Yayway Mortuary has a refrigeration unit with 80 stainless steel chambers. The chambers are German style (8' long), and their use costs 1,500 kyat per day (about \$1 USD). If death occurred at home, to gain the use of a chamber, the family must present a certificate of death from the ward office in which the decedent lived and state the cause of death. If the death occurred at a hospital, the family must present the hospital-issued death certificate. Yangon General Hospital Mortuary has approximately 25 refrigerated chambers and their use costs approximately \$10.00 per day.

2. Embalming:

In order to export non-cremated remains, embalming is required. However, embalming is not a practice typically performed in Burma. Burma has no Western-style funeral homes. The quality of embalming performed will not be to a Western-level. Yangon General Hospital Mortuary (tel:

+95-1-379868) can provide embalming services and the estimated cost is approximately \$100 USD or about 150,000 kyat.

3. Cremation:

For religious and practical reasons, cremation is most commonly performed in Burma. All cemeteries offer this service. A letter from the U.S. Embassy authorizing the release of the body for cremation may be requested by the mortuary or crematorium. If this is the case, please contact the Consular Section (+95-1-536509). We can only issue this letter during normal working hours, Monday-Friday. There is no cost for this letter.

In Rangoon, both Yayway and Yangon General Mortuaries can arrange for cremation and ash collection. Prices for foreigners are higher than for Burmese citizens. A casket is often needed to transport the body from the hospital or home to the crematorium, and there would be a fee charged for this casket.

Cremation processes in Burma are significantly different from those in the United States. The remains are usually partially burnt and the bones are then washed and ground to create ashes. The sight of these partially burnt remains may be troubling to family members. This makes the ashes considerably lighter by weight and smaller in volume compared with those remains cremated in the United States. An urn is usually a lacquer or wooden box.

4. Caskets and Containers:

Most locally manufactured wooden caskets are only suitable for local burial and do not meet international transportation standards. The standard size is 6'x18" (normally adjustable with no additional fees). Caskets for export are also available.

Locally manufactured wooden and clay containers for cremated ashes are available, but these may not be suitable for international shipment. The U.S. Postal Service requires that any urn shipped to the United States be sift-proof, tightly closed, and placed with padding inside a second box. Please visit the USPS website for additional information on shipping cremated ashes. https://about.usps.com/publications/pub139/pub139_001.htm

5. Exporting Remains:

The Police Surgeon, the Controller of Foreign Exchange, Customs, Immigration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must cooperate to approve the export of remains. Delays should be expected while these offices process the needed paperwork. The following documents are required to export remains:

1. *A death certificate from the Police Surgeon's Office.
2. *A receipt from the crematorium, if the remains are cremated.
3. *An export permit from the Customs Service.
4. Certificate from a Customs Preventative Officer attesting to the sealing of the casket or container.

5. *Police Surgeon's affidavit that the casket contains only the deceased plus necessary clothing and packing (or, in the case of cremation, that the box includes only the ashes of the deceased); that the remains have been embalmed; that the casket or container has been properly sealed, and is free from communicable diseases. This affidavit should be executed before a consular officer, and can be obtained from the U.S. Embassy.
6. Approval of airport immigration officials.
7. *Consular mortuary certificate, obtained from the U.S. Embassy.

* = these documents need to accompany the remains during travel

6. Costs:

In general, repatriating remains to the United States is expensive and total costs could exceed \$10,000.

Note: prices are estimates only and will depend on the circumstances.

As of February 2019: USD1 = 1519 Kyat

| Item or Service | Kyat (local currency) | U.S. Dollar equivalent |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Yangon General Mortuary refrigeration units daily charge | 15,220 | 10 |
| Medical investigation of cause-of-death | 380,500 | 250 |
| Embalming | 150,000 | 100 |
| Hearse within Yangon to airport | 192,000-256,000 | 125-170 |
| Hearse within Yangon to cemetery | 89,600 | 60 |
| Cremation/ash collection/cemetery charges | 4,000 | 2 |
| Urn and teak crate for export | 50,000 | 32 |
| Tomb (stacked cement cabinet above ground 30"x7.5'x2') | 250,000 | 170 |
| Locally manufactured plain wood casket (for export with zinc liner and crate) | 960,000 | 630 |
| Locally manufactured teak wood casket (for export with zinc liner and crate) | 1,280,000 | 840 |
| Plain wood casket with plastic interior (not for export) | 64,000 | 40 |
| Transport for plain wood transport from mortuary to cemetery | 150,000 | 100 |
| Transport for teak wood transport from mortuary to cemetery | 380,000 | 250 |
| Teak casket with two layers (plastic and cloth) interior (non-export) | 832,000 | 550 |
| Immigration and airport clearance agent charges | 1,024,000 | 675 |
| Miscellaneous charges ('service' fees and other admin costs) | 512,000 | 340 |

Airfreight for embalmed remains:

The average weight of a casket and its container required for the export of remains is 220 kilos. Listed below are prices for airfreight shipment of remains from Rangoon to various places in the continental United States. There may be additional charges for transfer between flights. There are currently no direct flights from Burma to the United States.

Please note that the rates below do not account for fees that Burmese organizations would charge to arrange for and carry out the repatriation of remains. Those fees could bring the total cost of repatriating remains to over \$10,000.

| | Rate per kilo in USD | Total in USD |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Los Angeles | \$ 11.00 | \$2,420.00* |
| Chicago | \$ 13.35 | \$2,937.00* |
| New York | \$ 13.00 | \$2,860.00* |

Airfreight for cremated remains:

The average weight of cremated ashes plus a clay container is 10 kilos.

| | Total in USD |
|-------------|--------------|
| Los Angeles | \$400.00* |
| Chicago | \$400.00* |
| New York | \$400.00* |

*plus a \$5.00 fee for an airway bill, \$0.90 per kilo for Fuel Surcharge and War Risk surcharge

7. Exhumation:

The police, local government, and health authorities must authorize exhumation. In the case of foreigners, the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) also needs to give consent. MOFA grants such authorization only if there is reasonable suspicion of foul play. It may take many months before all approvals are received for an exhumation.

8. Autopsies:

The Ministry of Health and Sports requires that every foreigner who dies in Burma undergo an autopsy. A copy of the autopsy report is not always provided to the Embassy or to the next-of-kin, even when requested.

Death Certificate and Release

When a death certificate is requested by the next-of-kin, a detailed examination of the remains may be performed. Tissue, blood, and body fluid samples may be sent for pathology analysis, which could take 2-3 weeks for the results.

Special Circumstances

If the legal representatives of the deceased do not want the autopsy to be performed, they must have a documented cause of death, in which case the Ministry of Health (MOH) might waive the mandatory autopsy. The request to waive the autopsy must be submitted to MOH together with a letter from the embassy that releases the MOH of any legal, criminal, life insurance, or similar liabilities.

Cost of autopsy and additional tests in Yangon is \$250.00.

Contacts:

Dr. Myo Thaik Oo (examiner), cell phone: +95-9-5340237, e-mail: myothaikoo@gmail.com

Dr. Nyan Min Tun (assistant examiner) cell phone: +95-9-2026741

9. Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services:

Local customs for funerals, disposition of remains, mourning, and memorial services may vary widely across the country depending on religious and ethnic traditions. However, there are some post-death practices that are shared regardless of religion or ethnicity.

Typically, the body of the deceased will remain at the morgue or in some cases the home of the deceased, for around three days. During this time family and friends will visit the body at the morgue or home. After three days, a funeral service will be held at a cemetery. Once the funeral service concludes, the body will either be buried or cremated at the cemetery. Christians normally bury the body. Buddhists normally cremate the body. Ashes are not generally preserved.

For Buddhists, during the seven days following death, family members leave their house “open,” including leaving windows and doors ajar. Lights in the house are also left on at all times. For both Christians and Buddhists, during this week friends and family continue to visit, even after the funeral service. On the seventh day after death, regardless of religion, a donation ceremony or memorial service is normally held in the home.

Cost estimates are applicable to Rangoon. In other areas of Burma, the costs associated with the disposition of remains could vary significantly. In addition, refrigeration and embalming services may not be available.

Embalmed remains can be exported to the United States only from Yangon. If a U.S. citizen dies elsewhere in Burma and the remains are to be repatriated to the United States, the next-of-kin will also have to pay to transport the remains to Yangon, in addition to any costs for shipping from Yangon to the United States. Burma's hot and humid climate, the lack of available cargo space on domestic flights, and the lack of ambulance services can make it difficult to arrange for the timely repatriation of embalmed remains to the United States.

Embalming in Burma is of a much lower quality than in the United States. A funeral director in the U.S. should be consulted to determine the feasibility of viewing the remains and of conducting an open casket funeral.

UPDATED: May 2020