

A GUIDE FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES

UPON THE PASSING OF A SINGAPORE CITIZEN OVERSEAS

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*Prepared by the Consular Directorate,
Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

You can contact the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the following ways:

- Consular Response Centre in Singapore (24-hours):
 - +65 6379 8800 (WhatsApp-enabled) / mfa_duty_officer@mfa.gov.sg.
- Contact details of consular officers can be found [here](#).
 - The Singapore Government Directory (SGDI) allows you to verify the name, e-mail address and phone number of the consular officer calling or messaging you.
- Contact details of Singapore's Overseas Missions can be found [here](#).

For clarifications on burial and cremation matters in Singapore, please visit the National Environment Agency's website on post-death matters [here](#) or contact the National Environment Agency's Port Health Office at +65 6222 2585 / port_health_cro@nea.gov.sg.

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Introduction

1 The passing of a loved one overseas is a distressing experience. While many arrangements must be made, you would likely not know what to do. During this time, the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) consular officers will do what we can, within our limits, to help you. **Please note, however, that MFA cannot interfere in the foreign authorities' procedures, e.g. stopping or hastening police investigations or post-mortems.** We hope that this guide will provide you with useful information to ease the emotional toll of losing a loved one. Parts of this guide may not apply due to the circumstances of each death, varying foreign laws and customs or the availability of certain facilities in different countries. Please contact MFA if you have further enquiries (e.g. country-specific laws or customs).

What MFA Can Do

2 MFA's consular officers can:

- Notify the next of kin of the death.
- Provide a list of undertakers for reference.
 - The Singapore Government and Singapore Overseas Missions do not vouch for the undertakers' service or reliability.
 - Next of kin should contact the undertakers directly for costs and other logistical and administrative arrangements.
- Liaise with foreign authorities, where necessary.
- Help transfer funds from the next of kin to the undertaker.
 - This is possible only (a) in countries where there is a Singapore Overseas Mission and (b) if the next of kin cannot pay the undertaker directly.

What MFA Cannot Do

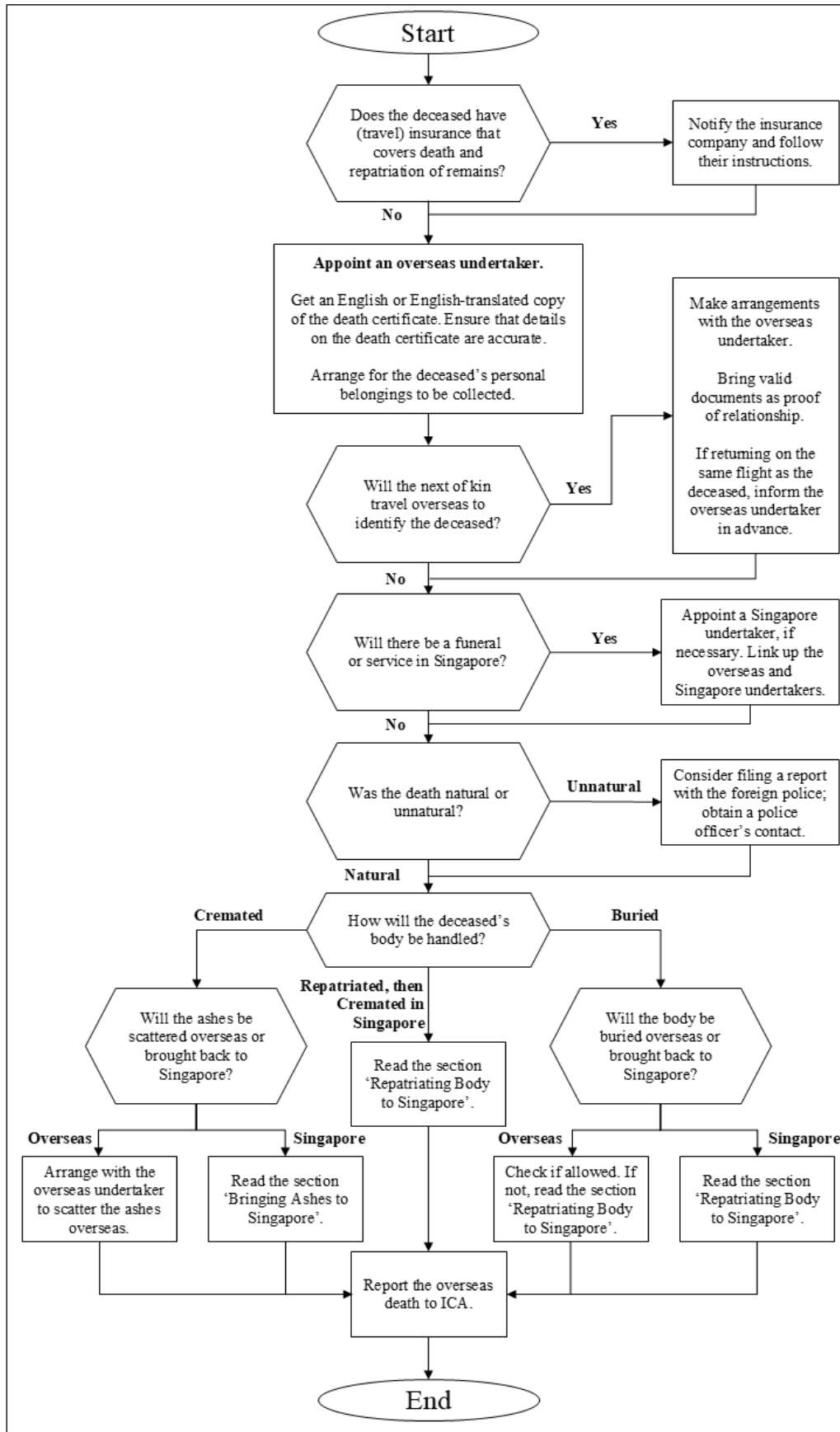
3 MFA's consular officers cannot:

- Investigate the death nor give legal advice.
- Make a police report on the deceased's family's behalf.
- Make insurance claims on the deceased's family's behalf.
- Pay any outstanding bills or debts.
- Pay for burial, cremation, repatriation, administrative and legal expenses.
- Send personal items back to Singapore.
- Interpret or translate documents in a foreign language into English.

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What You Need to Do

4 Please refer to the appended flowchart on what you need to do.



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Repatriating Body to Singapore

5 The overseas and Singapore undertakers will co-ordinate repatriating the deceased's body to Singapore. The coffin should not exceed 210 cm (length) by 90 cm (width) by 80 cm (height) for burial in Singapore. These documents, which must be fully in or translated into English, are required to import the coffin into Singapore:

- (a) **Overseas death certificate.** The death certificate should include the deceased's name (as per Singapore passport or identity card), citizenship, passport number, date of death and cause of death. The death certificate (whether original or copy) must accompany the coffin.
- (b) **Sealing certificate.**
- (c) **Coffin export permit** from the country exporting the body.
- (d) **Letter(s) of authorisation**, which will be provided by the undertakers, to allow the overseas and Singapore undertakers to act on the deceased's family's behalf.
- (e) [If applicable] **Embalming certificate.** If the deceased has a pacemaker or other similar devices, you must inform the embalmer or undertaker.
- (f) [If applicable] **Exhumation certificate**, if repatriating exhumed remains.
- (g) [Optional] **Airway bill** or **air consignment note**.
- (h) Any other documents as required by the foreign authorities. If unsure, please consult your overseas undertaker.

Subsequent Cremation in Singapore

6 The cremator in Singapore's crematoria can accommodate coffins only up to 210 cm (length) by 60 cm (width) by 56 cm (height). The ashes may then be stored in niches at a crematorium or scattered at ash scattering centres.

Infectious Diseases

7 If the deceased was (or was suspected to have been) infected with an infectious disease of concern (e.g. Mers, Ebola), the overseas and Singapore undertakers must inform the authorities overseas and in Singapore respectively. Only undertakers that have undergone the Basic Infection Control Course in Singapore ([here](#)) can manage deceased persons who have contracted infectious diseases. The National Environment Agency's Port Health Office will assess whether such bodies can be imported into Singapore.

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Bringing Ashes to Singapore

This section is only for deceased persons who have been cremated overseas. If you want to cremate the body in Singapore, please refer to 'Repatriating Body to Singapore' above.

8 Ashes must be placed in an urn or container and accompanied by these documents, which must be fully in or translated into English, before being brought into Singapore:

- (a) **Overseas death certificate.** The death certificate should include the deceased's name (as per Singapore passport or identity card), citizenship, passport number, date of death and cause of death.
- (b) **Cremation certificate.**

Points to Note

9 When selecting an urn, consider the dimensions of the columbarium niche where it will be placed. You do not need a permit to bring ashes into Singapore. As commercial couriers generally do not transport ashes, please consult your overseas undertaker on how the ashes can be brought back to Singapore. If you are travelling overseas to bring the ashes back to Singapore, please check if the airline allows you to hand-carry the urn on your return flight.

10 There are no restrictions on bringing back ashes of deceased persons who were (or were suspected to have been) infected with an infectious disease of concern (e.g. Mers, Ebola).

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Reporting an Overseas Death

11 Once the deceased's last rites are completed, you should register the death with the Singapore Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA). Doing so is free and it can be done online ([here](#)). If you face trouble reporting, you may e-mail ICA_DPU_RBD@ica.gov.sg or visit the Registry of Births and Deaths at the ICA Services Centre. While there is no reporting deadline, please note that estate administration matters (e.g. CPF monies, HDB flat ownership, will execution) in Singapore may be delayed or stalled if the death is not reported to ICA.

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