

## QUITO, ECUADOR

December 21, 2011

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Department of State (CA/OSC/EMR)

INFO: AmConsul GUAYAQUIL

FROM: Amembassy QUITO

SUBJECT: CASC: DEATHS – DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

REF: 7 FAM 261

The National Sanitary Service (Servicio Sanitario Nacional), Ecuadorian Ministry of Public Health in Quito governs the burial, embalming, preparation for shipment, and exhumation of remains of deceased persons. Regulations regarding disposition of remains are contained in Decision No. 3463 of the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador, dated July 13, 1974, Official Registry No. 597 published on July 17, 1974. Its scope is nationwide.

#### **a. MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE BURIAL**

- (1) When body embalmed: Burial must occur within 36 hours of death. In practice, disposition of embalmed remains sometimes continues pending up to six days. If putrefaction is present or there is initial decomposition, burial must be immediate.
- (2) When body is not embalmed: Burial must take place within 24 hours of death. However, in practice, burial is sometimes delayed as much as 36 hours. One should note the cause of death of the deceased when considering funeral planning, given that for certain causes, an intact body can be left alone for up to 36 hours without any preservation. There is also the possibility that the decomposition is accelerated by weather and humidity in the locality where death occurs.

#### **b. EMBALMING**

The Chief of the Public Health in each province must authorize embalming. Embalming is done by the local National Police Forensic Medical Doctor (Coroner). Many funeral homes also have embalming facilities. However, funeral homes need a forensic doctor or a medical technologist to perform this procedure.

**c. CREMATION**

Local law permits cremation when death is from natural causes; permission from sanitary authorities is required.

Cremation is also allowed in cases of violent death, however, a complete case file on the investigation of death is required, as well as authorization and assumption of responsibility by the next of kin.

In these cases, the authorized signatures of three direct relatives of the deceased are necessary to authorize the cremation process. These relatives ought to have blood ties to the deceased or be in-laws up to the second degree (brother/sister/mother/father in law)

**d. CASKETS AND CONTAINERS**

The requirements of the local sanitary authorities meet all the conditions for containers prescribed in 7 FAM 262d. However, bodies are not allowed to be exported unless they are embalmed. Sealed caskets are available in Ecuador and air-tight metal containers can be made locally.

**e. EXPORTATION OF REMAINS**

Local requirements regarding exportation of:

(1) Dead bodies: (death by non-contagious disease only)

- (a) Official death certificate
- (b) Certificate from embalmer
- (c) Inspection certificate from sanitary authorities covering embalming, packing and preparation for shipment.
- (d) Permit to transport and export body issued by sanitary authorities.
- (e) Notation in Civil Registry regarding removal of body (made at the port of shipment, Quito or Guayaquil)
- (f) Customs inspection of shipment and seal on box to the effect that the box contains nothing but the remains of the deceased. This requirement is usually omitted.

(2) Ashes: (a)(d)(e) and (f)

-Certificate of Cremation from the Cemetery or Funeral Home that was authorized by the family to conduct this process.

(3) Disinterred Remains: Same requirements as for dead bodies, minus the embalmer's certificate as well as the permit of exhumation granted by the health authorities in each province (Provincial Health Chiefs)

In order to process the permit of exhumation one must have the death certificate from the authorities at the Civil Registry as well as comply with the legal norm that the body be buried a minimum of 4 years in a cemetery.

**f. COSTS**

(1)Estimated cost of burial:

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| In Quito, including rental of grave for 4 years | \$700.00   |
| The purchase price of a burial niche            | \$5,000.00 |
| Coffin and funeral services                     | \$2,000.00 |

(2)Estimated cost of preparation of bodies for shipment, embalming, preparation for shipment (packing, documents, local transportation, etc.)  
Container (coffin & outer container including air-tight or welded metal case)

**TOTAL** **\$2,100.00**

(3)Estimated cost of cremation:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Cremation, urn & transportation to crematory | \$800.00 |
| Cremation export permit                      |          |

**TOTAL** **\$1,800.00**

(4)Transportation

**ASHES**

Average weight of urn containing ashes is 3 to 5 kilos.

**REMAINS**

Estimated cost by air per kg. x 250 kg (price varies by airline, from \$9.00 to \$20.00)

|  |         |                 |
|--|---------|-----------------|
| Air freight Quito to New York, per kilo      | \$ 9.54 | <b>2,385.00</b> |
| Air freight Quito to Chicago, per kilo       | \$ 9.30 | <b>2,325.00</b> |
| Air freight Quito to San Francisco, per kilo | \$ 9.47 | <b>2,367.50</b> |
| Air freight Quito to Los Angeles             | \$ 9.47 | <b>2,367.50</b> |

**g. EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT**

Regulations governing exhumation of remains state it may be done only after a minimum period of four years.

Estimated cost of disinterment and preparation of remains for shipment: \$800.00  
Coffin and outer container: \$500.00  
Plus cost of transportation for approximately 50 kg.