

U.S. Consulate General Guayaquil

Disposition of Remains Report

Updated May 31, 2019

The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile this data. The District Health Director (Dirección Distrital de Salud) of each province controls the burial, embalming, preparation and authorization for shipment and exhumation of remains of deceased persons. Regulations regarding disposition of remains are contained in Decision No. 0192-2018 of the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador, dated March 29, 2018, which was published in Official Registry No.226 on April 20, 2018. Its scope is nationwide.

Part I.

Republic of Ecuador

Part II. U.S. Consulate Information

U.S. Consulate General

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[Country Specific Information - Ecuador](#)

[Safety and Security: Register with the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil](#)

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

A. Country Profile: According to the INEC (The Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census): 80% of Ecuadorians are Roman Catholics, 11.30% belong to the Evangelical Missionary Union (represented by many Protestants in Ecuador), 1.29% are Jehovah Witnesses, other religions are present in smaller numbers, such as Eastern Orthodoxy, Mormonism, Buddhism, Judaism, Spiritism and Islam.

B. Religious Activities for Visitors:

1. Roman Catholic Church:

- [Archdiocese of Guayaquil](#)
- [Archdiocese of Cuenca](#)

2. Jewish Community: <http://godaven.com/detail.asp?Id=17021>

3. Jehovah's Witnesses: <http://www.jw.org/es/testigos-de-jehov%C3%A1/oficinas/ecuador/>

4. Mormon Church: <https://www.lds.org/church/temples/guayaquil-ecuador?lang=eng>
5. Islam: <http://www.centroislamico.org/contacto>

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Ecuador:

For a list of funeral homes in the Guayaquil consular district, please visit our website:
<https://ec.usembassy.gov>

Part V. Profile of Services available in Ecuador regarding preparation and shipment of remains:

A. Disposition of Remains (general)

Remains in Ecuador may be buried, cremated or exhumed. Family members should select a funeral home in country to carry out their instructions. Funeral homes will also assist in obtaining the appropriate paperwork in cases where the family wishes to ship the remains back to the United States.

Morgues are available in most major cities and hospitals. If the death occurs in a city where there is no morgue available, the Ecuadorian National Police may transport the remains to the closest city with morgue capabilities. All the Ecuadorian provincial morgues are listed in the National Forensic Sciences and Legal Medicine Service's website: <https://www.cienciasforenses.gob.ec/?p=385>. All these morgues have freezers and infrastructure to carry out autopsies and death investigations to determine causes of death.

B. Specific facts relating to embalming, cremation, caskets, exportation, documentation requirements, preparation, shipment, and exhumation

During the embalming process, internal organs will be disposed of or preserved, in accordance with the Ordenanzas of each Municipality or G.A.D. (Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado) See relevant paragraphs below for additional important information.

C. Requirements for deaths by infectious disease or under suspicious circumstances

Ecuadorian law provides that all deaths caused by non-natural, unknown, or suspicious causes should be accompanied by an autopsy report, detailing the cause of the death. Also violent deaths (by suicide, homicide or accident) will require an autopsy report and cannot be cremated unless there's a judicial authorization.

D. Shipping

Cargo space availability and fares are independently established by the different carriers. When arranging shipment of remains to the United States, it is of key value to ensure there is space available to fit a coffin in a particular flight. Urns containing ashes are rather easily

accommodated and can be either shipped via cargo or hand-carried. To export/transport remains or ashes to the U.S., the Ecuadorian Ministry of Health must issue the proper authorization. This process is taken care of by the funerary home representative within the services hired.

E. Local authorities responsible for licensing funeral directors and morticians

As determined in Resolution ARCSA-DE-040-2015-GGG of the Ecuadorian National Sanitation Agency (Agencia Nacional de Control, Regulación y Vigilancia Sanitaria) which was published in Official Registry No.538 on July 8, 2015, all establishments providing funeral services (crematoriums, funeral homes, etc.) are exempt of the issuance of a license or permission to operate, however, they will be subject to controls and sanitation supervision.

F. Local authorities responsible for making findings regarding the cause of death and for issuing death local certificates

In order to register a death in Ecuador, the next of kin (or funeral home appointed thereby) must obtain the INEC document (“Informe Estadístico de Defunción General”) from the attending physician or the coroner who performed the autopsy. This no-fee document, which indicates the deceased’s biographic data and cause of death, must be taken to the Civil Registry for permanent filing and issuance of the Ecuadorian death certificate.

Ecuadorian death certificates can only be issued by the authorities of the Civil Registry in the location where the death took place, or by the National Civil Registry in Quito.

For further information about the Ecuadorian registration process, and to see the list of Registro Civil offices, visit: <https://www.registrocivil.gob.ec>.

1. MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE BURIAL

- a) When body is not embalmed: Burial must be made within 72 hours of death, according to local law. If putrefaction is present, burial or cremation (with the proper authorization) must be immediate. If a judicial process needs to be followed with the remains then these have to be properly embalmed for temporary preservation.
- b) When body is refrigerated at a major morgue: Under Ecuadorian law, remains that are not claimed within 30 days of death may be disposed of by burial in a common grave or donation to a medical school. However, some morgues, at the director’s discretion, may agree on a case-by-case basis to hold a refrigerated body for up to six months.

2. EMBALMING

Embalming may be performed by the Forensic Institute staff and private professionals employed by registered funeral homes, under a specific request of the family and/or when the National Sanitation Agency orders this process due to the epidemiological risk result of the death.

The average cost to embalming in Ecuador is approximately \$500. The normal practice in Guayaquil, however, is not to embalm, but merely to inject the cadaver with formaldehyde (unless the body is going to be shipped outside the country). Remains that are to be shipped out of Ecuador must be embalmed.

3. CREMATION

Local laws permit cremation of bodies. Cremation is requested and approved by Public or Private Health establishments of the city where the cremation will take place. Cremation facilities have been available in Guayaquil since January 1987. In Guayaquil, cremation services are provided by Jardines de la Esperanza and Junta de Beneficencia funeral homes; in Cuenca, the Municipal Cemetery and the Camposanto Santa Ana funeral home offer cremation services. These establishments can operate under the control and supervision of the Ecuadorian National Sanitation Agency (ARCSA). Other funeral homes that do not have cremation facilities can contract with these institutions for cremations.

4. CASKETS AND CONTAINERS

Funeral homes must use containers that meet all the requirements of the local health authorities. Bodies are not allowed to be exported unless they are embalmed. Sealed caskets made in Ecuador are for one-time use; air-tight metal containers can be made locally.

5. EXPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS OR HUMAN ASHES

Authorization to transport a body, remains or ashes outside Ecuadorian territory will be requested and approved by Health Zone Coordinators (Coordinaciones Zonales de Salud) through the International Sanitation Unit of Epidemiological Supervision (Unidad de Sanidad Internacional de Vigilancia Epidemiológica). The requestor will need to present the following:

- a) Copy of the Ecuadorian death inscription obtained at the Civil Registry's office
- b) Copy of the embalming or cremation certificate
- c) Copy of the autopsy report (if applicable)
- d) Copy of ID or passport of requester

6. COSTS

i. Estimated cost of local burial:

In Guayaquil, including rental of grave for four years	\$2,610
The purchase price of a burial plot plus burial cost (coffin and funeral services)	\$5,260

ii. Estimated cost of preparation or remains for shipment:

Embalming (on average)	\$800
Preparation for shipment (packing, documents, transportation, etc.)	\$2,200
Container (metal coffin and outer container case)	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$4,000

iii. Estimated cost for cremation:

Cremation, urn and transportation	\$2,000
Cremation permits for exportation	\$560
TOTAL	\$2,560

Cremation with urn and burial plot (Average weight of urn containing ashes is 5.00 kilos)	\$3,900
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iv. Transportation cost for remains (per kilo):

From Guayaquil to New York (East Coast)	\$5.25
From Guayaquil to Washington D.C.	\$6.00
From Guayaquil to Seattle (West Coast)	\$7.46
From Guayaquil to Dallas	\$6.05
From Guayaquil to San Francisco	\$7.62
From Guayaquil to Los Angeles	\$6.00
From Guayaquil to Chicago (Mid-West)	\$4.00
From Guayaquil to Miami	\$5.63
From Guayaquil to Puerto Rico	\$4.50

Additional costs to be included:

- Fuel	\$0.45/Kg (minimum fee \$15.00)
- Security	\$0.10/Kg (minimum fee \$15.00)
- Airway bill	\$15.00
- Shipping agency fee	\$120.00

Estimated TOTAL Transportation Cost by Air

(Preparation and transportation based on a total shipment weight of 200 Kg, additional minimum charges may also apply)

From Guayaquil to New York (East Coast)	\$1,295
From Guayaquil to Washington D.C.	\$1,445
From Guayaquil to Seattle (West Coast)	\$1,737
From Guayaquil to Dallas	\$1,455
From Guayaquil to San Francisco	\$1,769
From Guayaquil to Los Angeles	\$1,445
From Guayaquil to Chicago (Mid-West)	\$1,045
From Guayaquil to Miami	\$1,371
From Guayaquil to Puerto Rico	\$1,145

Note: When death occurs in the interior of Ecuador, the remains may be transferred to Guayaquil for preparation and shipment. The funeral home can arrange this domestic transportation, which costs an average of \$600.

7. EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT

Regulations governing exhumation of remains state it may be done only after a minimum period of four years, unless there is a Court order with the proper Health District Director's authorization.

Estimated cost of disinterment and shipment:

- Preparation of remains for shipment and paperwork, coffin and outer container \$960
- Exhumation \$630

Plus cost of transportation
(estimated weight of container approximately 50 Kg)

8. LOCAL CUSTOMS REGARDING FUNERALS, DISPOSITION OF REMAINS, MOURNING, MEMORIAL SERVICES

The power of attorney for arranging for disposition of the deceased's remains should be signed, notarized, apostilled and then sent to the next of kin's agent in Ecuador (normally a funeral home). Although obtaining the apostille can be a time-consuming administrative task, Ecuadorian authorities typically require this formality in order for the remains to be released to a representative.

An apostille is a certificate issued to authenticate a notary's signature and seal. In the United States, the Secretary of State of the state where a document was notarized should normally provide the apostille. The following webpage contains a full list of competent authorities that can provide apostilles in the United States:

<https://www.hcch.net/en/states/authorities/details3/?aid=353>.

Another alternative is for the next of kin to go to the closest Ecuadorian Consulate and request that they prepare and notarize a power of attorney. In this case, an apostille would not be necessary. For further information regarding notarial services at the Ecuadorian consulates, please visit the Ecuadorian Embassy's website at

http://www.ecuador.org/nuevosite/serviciosconsulares_actosnotariales.php.