

2. We first send a 3 page document to the family we are serving. It asks for specific information that we need to prepare documents and it describes the process in detail for the grieving family. The accuracy of the information they return is vital. Once legal documents have been filed they are difficult or impossible to change. We also need signed authorization from the legal next of kin regardless of whether they are in India or the U.S. If a person is married it is the spouse. If not married it is the parents. If there are no parents it is the siblings. We accept an emailed signature as legal.

3. We know everyone gathers around the grieving family and wants to help. BUT, we insist on only ONE family agent that we communicate with. The more people involved the more confusion and the more time taken up needlessly.

4. The first step in releasing the body is to obtain a signed death certificate. Bodies can be released to us without the death certificate having been signed. Some states have "electronic death registration" and it is done on line. Some require a physically signed paper. By the vary nature of repatriations being accidents, suicides, murders or medically unattended, our relationship with these local authorities is key. Some are highly professional and compassionate. Some are not. All have a legally mandated time allowance in which to sign the death certificate AFTER they have completed their physical examination of the body. Once they release the body to us they are signing off and giving us permission to transit. Certified copies of the death certificate are generated through government offices AFTER they are signed. This requires a physical visit.

5. The body must be "embalmed" for international travel. That is the injection of chemicals via the circulatory system. This preserves from decay as well as sanitizes. This operation can take anywhere from several hours to a day if we need to restore an accident victim. What tragedy for a family if their loved one is disfigured. We do our best.

6. The Certified Copies of the Death Certificate, Transit Permit and Letter of Non-Communicable Disease are all obtained at the locality of the death and are issued by local government offices. We constantly race to complete them by Friday afternoon. Local government offices are not open on weekends.

7. We add other documents and have obtained the original passport for presentation to the Consulate. We may use a Consulate in the jurisdiction where death occurred or we may have all shipped to us with the body and bring them to the NY Consulate. This is determined on a case by case basis dependent on many factors that dictate the fastest way to get the job done. WE SO APPRECIATE THE COOPERATION OF ALL THE CONSULATES.

8. Once we clear the Consulate the finished papers have to be sent to India for approval at least 24 hours before international flight time. Air India is contracted with a flight booking company, they do not make their own flight reservations. Although the body travels on passenger aircraft it is considered "air cargo". We must be at the airport and clear all papers and check in the international shipping container 5 HOURS ahead of the scheduled flight time. The airline will not accept the body unless the papers have been in India for 24 hours. Our Funeral Home was a "Certified TSA Air Cargo Inspection Facility", able to bring the international container already inspected and certified by us. TSA eliminated that funeral director inspection program. Any funeral home must now put the container through security procedures and devices on the airport grounds. Any funeral home providing repatriation services must be a "known carrier" to that specific airline or cannot book a flight.

9. Once we have consigned the container to the airline our job is complete.