

## Disposition of Remains Report Laos

Embassy of the United States of America in Laos

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[Laos Country Information Sheet](#)

[On-line Registration with the U.S. Embassy \(STEP\)](#)

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### Maximum Period before Burial

Maximum period before burial: There are no laws or regulations in Laos specifying a maximum period before burial. As a practical matter a corpse which has not been embalmed must be buried or cremated within three days. A body which has been "embalmed" locally must be buried or cremated within seven days because of the low standards of embalming that are available in Laos.

Morgue facilities in Laos are limited in availability and quality. Refrigerated morgues are only available in larger hospitals in Vientiane and Luangprabang. The Chinese society in Vientiane also has a refrigerated morgue.

There are few cemeteries for local interment in Laos. Some Americans have been buried in Laos local Hmong customs, but these burials are arranged by the families at the village level following Hmong traditions. Within Vientiane, there are cemeteries associated with the Chinese and Vietnamese communities and the Roman Catholic Church. Circumstances would determine whether it would be possible to bury a person in Laos who had not been a member of one of these communities. The cost for the service and burial plot is subject to negotiation if it can be done at all.

### Embalming

There are no professional embalming facilities in Laos. However, embalming solution is usually available for purchase in Vientiane. If the corpse is at a hospital, family members can often pay hospital staff to inject the body with the embalming solution. Rudimentary embalming can also be done by the Chinses Society for a fee. This is only effective in preserving the body for a few extra days. Given Laos' tropical climate, embalming is recommended as soon as feasibly possible. If a body will be repatriated the selected funeral home in Bangkok, Thailand will assess the condition of the corpse and conduct additional embalming as necessary and feasible.

### Cremation

Cremation is the standard means of disposition of remains in Laos and is permissible under Lao law and custom. There are no modern crematoriums in Laos. All cremations are performed at Buddhist temples with wood as the fuel sometimes with kerosene or gasoline as an accelerant. Since local cremations are rudimentary they result in larger-sized pieces of bones rather than a fine ash.

### Caskets and containers

Caskets and containers available locally do not meet minimum requirements for air shipment of a corpse. Wooden caskets are available in Laos for use in cremation or local interment. Light caskets designed for cremations cost around \$50. More substantial hardwood caskets for burial cost around \$100. Hermetically sealed caskets are not available in Laos. If a body will be repatriated the selected funeral home in Thailand will provide the casket.

### Exportation of remains

There are no laws or regulations concerning the exportation of ashes and remains. Despite the lack of formal regulations, authorities will require a death certificate, permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and sometimes permission from the Ministry of Interior before permitting either a corpse or ashes to be transported out of the country. Lao authorities have advised that the same certificates and documents are required to ship ashes as for the export of whole remains. The only viable method of exporting whole remains to the U.S. is by using the services of a Thailand-based repatriation service.

### Repatriation service providers:

#### **AsiaOne International by Teck Hong Funeral**

No. 7, THF Building, Chan Road 46, Wat Phrayakrai, Bangkholaem, Bangkok, 10120

Tel : +66(0)2675-0501 (24 hours), +66(0)2675-0502

Fax : +66(0)2675-2227  
Email : info@asiaone-thf.com  
<http://www.asiaone-thf.com/>  
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**EverCare Solution-Funeral Services Experts**

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*Exhumation and Shipment*

There are no laws or regulations concerning the disinterment of remains. Outside of Vientiane it is not uncommon that local authorities will bury deceased foreigners as a form of temporary storage until such time as the deceased can be identified and retrieved by the appropriate Embassy. Other embassies have exhumed and shipped remains several months after the death.

*Costs*

Morgue storage: \$50 per day  
Local Interment: \$400 to \$800  
Cremation: \$400 to \$800  
Shipment of ashes: \$100 to \$250  
Local Embalming: \$200 to \$300

Preparation/Shipment to U.S.: \$5000-\$8000.*Exhumation and shipment*

There are no laws or regulations concerning the disinterment or shipment of remains outside the country.

### Autopsy

There are no regulations or requirements regarding autopsies but they are generally not performed in Laos as a matter of cultural practice. Laos also lacks skilled professionals able to undertake such a task. Local authorities will not normally conduct an autopsy or run toxicology reports.

### Remarks

Laos is a developing country with very little modern infrastructure. Medical facilities and services related to death and burial or cremation are limited and do not meet Western standards. Communication with parts of Laos outside of its cities along the Mekong River is also limited. This can result in lengthy delays in obtaining death certificates and other necessary documents from the Lao authorities. The cause of death listed on death local certificates may be vague or very general.