

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Malawi

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Lilongwe, Malawi assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

Dr. Charles Dzamalala

Pathologist/Embalmer
MalMed Health Care Services Ltd
Blantyre 3
Tel: +265 (0) 1-871-911
Cell +265 (0) 0888-837-762

Dr. Tamiwe Monica Tomoka,

Pathologist/Embalmer
Kamuzu Central Hospital
Lilongwe
Tel: +265 (0) 1-919 96251
Cell: +265 884 013 495

Sunset Private Mortuary

Funeral Home
Kanengo Industrial Area
Lilongwe
Cell: +265 999 955 675\980 111 114

Goodwill Funeral Services

Funeral Home
Blantyre/Lilongwe
Cell: +265 888 850 429/999 850 429

Mthunzi Funeral Services

Funeral Home
Blantyre
Cell: +265 991 616 569

Their services include mortuary, facilitate autopsy, embalming, facilitating cremation and shipment of remains to any location in the United States.

Cremation: There are two crematoriums in Malawi that are acceptable by the international standards: Hindu Crematorium in Blantyre, and Shree Seva Samaj Crematorium in Lilongwe. Below are the locations and contact information in Blantyre and Lilongwe.

Hindu Cremation Services (Blantyre)

C/o Bharat Trading Company Limited
P.O. Box 5163, Blantyre
Mr. Vanzara: +265(0) 1-823-961
Mr. Navin Patel: +265(0) 888-821-636

**Shree Seva Samaj Crematorium
(Lilongwe)**

Along Blantyre M1 Road
After Partners in Hope Hospital, Lilongwe
Mr. JB Kotecha: +265(0) 999-223-563
Mr. Kalaria +265(0) 888-821-000
Mr. Ganatra: +265 (0) 888-821-785

Profile of services available in Malawi regarding preparation and shipment of remains

1) Maximum period before burial

Malawi law does not regulate a maximum period before burial. The Malawian norm is to bury the body the same day if possible. Cold storage facilities are provided at all 24 Government secondary level care (District) hospitals and the four central hospitals: Lilongwe Central Hospital in Lilongwe, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, Mzuzu Central Hospital in Mzuzu, and Zomba Central Hospital in Zomba. The storage capacity for all the Central Hospitals and District Hospital mortuaries is highly limited. The maximum amount of time the hospitals can store a body is 30 days. After one month, bodies still unidentified in the mortuaries are referred to the District or City Assemblies for disposal in mass graves in Government cemeteries. This is done in conjunction with the Malawi Police.

2) Embalming

Malawi law does not regulate embalming and in most cases, bodies are not embalmed before local burial.

3) Cremations

The Hindu Cremation Services handle cremation in Malawi. They are located in Lilongwe and in Blantyre. They require a death report (certified copies will do), a consent letter for cremation that is verified by the family, and a fee (see costs in Section 6). Ashes are ready for collection after 72 hours. Crematorium staff may also be able to assist with the logistics of shipping the remains for an additional fee.

4) Caskets and Containers

When remains are to be transported out of the country, the body is first embalmed or otherwise appropriately prepared or cremated for shipment. It is then placed in a galvanized tin coffin or casket (or urn in the case of cremation) for shipment. This is then placed within a wooden coffin, which is finally placed in a suitable packing case that can support the weight of the complete container and body. Caskets and urns that meet the requirements for shipping out of the country are available locally.

5) Exportation of Human Remains:

To export human remains, the following documents are required by the Ministry of Health and Population to issue a Transmittal Permit for the Remains:

- a) Death certificate issued by the National Registrations Bureau (NRB).
- b) Death report signed by a registered medical doctor on form B of the Births and Registration Act.
- c) Medical report from the Ministry of Health and Population stating the cause of death, the body is free of infectious disease, and that the body can be transported outside the country.
- d) Embalming certificate to include statement of method used.
- e) Malawi Customs form 35-Declaration form for minor exports.
- f) Declaration Certificate stating that the contents of coffin/casket are only human remains of deceased person.
- g) Postmortem report if death was due to unnatural causes.
- h) Transport/shipment permit from the Malawi Police Service – Interpol section
- i) Consular Mortuary Certificate (issued by the U.S. Embassy)

The following are also required to export an embalmed body

- a) Metal lined leak proof coffin or casket.
- b) Physical address and phone number of person/agent sending the remains.
- c) Coffin with metal lining inside.
- d) Casket to be enclosed in wooden crate for ease of handling with forklift and in a manner that it is not identified as such during transportation/shipment, also referred to as Police Clearance Certificate.

The following are required to export human ashes

- a) Death certificate from National Registrations Bureau (NRB).
- b) Death report signed by a registered medical doctor on form B of the Births and Registration Act.
- c) Certificate of Cremation
- d) Remains are packed in tin lined wooden packing box (the Urn) that is hermitically sealed.
- e) Malawi Customs form 35- Declaration form for minor exports.
- f) Police clearance certificate.
- g) Declaration certificate as with human remains.

6) Costs:

The pathologists listed in Part IV can facilitate the navigation of mortuary services. Prices are not regulated, but you can expect to pay between \$5000 to \$7,200 for an autopsy, embalming, paperwork, transport, and aircraft charges. Prices are subject to change.

7) Autopsies

Autopsies are performed only by the pathology section of government hospitals (e.g., Kamuzu Central and Queen Elizabeth Central) and Malawi College of Medicine. Hospital records and death notice from village chief (if death occurs in rural area) are required documents.

Autopsies are typically required when a foreign national dies of unnatural causes. A waiver may be available.

8) Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services

Malawian funerals traditionally occur no more than three days after the death. In rare circumstances the burial might be up to one week later (e.g. if close family is out of the country). People traditionally go to see the body and pay their respects before he/she is buried. Bodies are buried either in the city's cemetery or in the local village. Before death, the deceased might have requested to be buried near family or to be brought back to his/her home village. If such a request was made, the family typically obliges. Mourners visit the body and contribute food or cash to neighbors. The neighbors traditionally prepare fresh meals at the site where people gather to pay their respects (i.e. they do not cook ahead of time and bring the prepared food).