

Protocol When a Foreign Citizen Dies in Mexico

Natural death outside a hospital or medical facility
Information for Canadian and U.S. citizens

IMMEDIATE ACTION: Call 911 or the local Red Cross. Do not move the person or disturb the surroundings unless emergency personnel instruct you to do so.

Procedure in Mexico

1. Call emergency services

Call 911 or the local Red Cross. Medical personnel must assess the situation and confirm the death. In Bahia Kino, the locally listed Red Cross number is **662-242-0339**.

2. Leave the person and surroundings undisturbed

Do not reposition the person, remove medical equipment, clean the area or discard medications. Keep the passport, Mexican residency card, medical records, prescriptions and doctor's contact information available.

3. Expect police and the Ministerio Publico

A death outside a medical facility is normally treated as an unattended death until authorities establish the cause. The Ministerio Publico decides whether the body must be taken to **SEMEFO**, the forensic medical service.

4. Contact the person's Mexican doctor

A Mexican-licensed doctor who recently treated the person may be able to certify a known natural cause of death. When no qualified attending doctor can certify the cause, a forensic examination or autopsy may be required even if the death appears natural.

5. Contact a reputable Mexican funeral home

The funeral home can assist after the authorities release the body. It commonly helps with removal, registration, official certificates, cremation, burial and transportation of ashes or remains.

6. Notify the person's embassy or consulate

The consulate can help locate or notify next of kin, explain local procedures and provide information about funeral homes. It cannot override Mexican authorities or normally pay funeral and transportation expenses.

Funeral Home and Documentation

Do not allow a funeral home to remove the person until Mexican authorities have authorized the release. The funeral home may assist with:

- Medical certification of the cause of death
- Registration of the death with the Mexican Civil Registry
- Certified copies of the Mexican death certificate
- Cremation or burial in Mexico
- Preparation and transportation of ashes or remains to Canada or the United States

Information for Canadian Citizens

Contact the nearest Canadian government office or Global Affairs Canada's 24-hour Emergency Watch and Response Centre.

Telephone from outside Canada	+1-613-996-8885 (collect where available)
From Canada or the United States	1-800-387-3124
Email	SOS@international.gc.ca
WhatsApp	+1-613-909-8881

Obtain several certified copies of the Mexican death certificate. Canadian organizations may require a certified English or French translation and, in some cases, an apostille. The deceased's Canadian passport should be submitted for cancellation as directed by Canadian consular officials.

Information for U.S. Citizens

Notify the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Bahia Kino and Hermosillo are served by the U.S. Consulate General in Hermosillo.

Calling from Mexico	+52-55-2579-2000
Calling from the United States	301-985-8843

After Mexican authorities issue the local death certificate, the U.S. consulate may prepare a **Consular Report of Death Abroad (CRODA)**. This English-language report is generally used for insurance, benefits, banking and estate matters in the United States.

Returning Remains or Ashes

If the body will be transported internationally, funeral homes in Mexico and the destination country generally coordinate the arrangements. Requirements vary with the circumstances and carrier.

For transportation to the United States

- Mexican death certificate
- Consular mortuary certificate
- Funeral director's affidavit
- Embalming or preparation certificate
- Transit permit
- Communicable-disease documentation when required

Transporting cremated remains is generally simpler, but the ashes should still be accompanied by the Mexican death certificate, cremation certificate and any required transit documentation.

Important Points for Both Nationalities

- The legal next of kin normally authorizes burial, cremation or repatriation.
- An unmarried partner or friend may not automatically be recognized as next of kin under Mexican law.
- Contact travel or medical insurance immediately. The insurer may require the use of a particular assistance company or funeral provider.
- Ask for several certified copies of the Mexican death certificate.
- Do not schedule a funeral in Canada or the United States until transportation and customs clearance are confirmed.
- Mexican funeral homes may require payment in advance.
- The family is not obligated to hire an unsolicited funeral home that approaches them.
- Final decisions about an autopsy, release of the body and required documents rest with Mexican authorities.

Official Sources

Government of Canada: Death abroad and services in Mexico
travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/death-abroad
travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/die-in-mexico

U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Mexico: Death abroad and emergency contacts
travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/living-abroad/death.html
mx.usembassy.gov/contact/

Prepared as general practical guidance. Procedures can vary by municipality and individual circumstances. Follow the directions of emergency personnel, the Ministerio Publico, consular officials and the selected funeral home.