

# When someone dies in Qatar

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**The process when a British national dies in Qatar, including registering the death, funerals and cremations, and bringing the person's body to the UK.**

## Contacting the insurance company

If the person who died had insurance, contact their insurance company as soon as possible. Read the general guidance on what to do when someone dies abroad if you're not sure if they had insurance.

The insurance company may cover the cost of bringing the person's body to the UK (repatriation) and help with any medical, legal, interpretation and translation fees.

## Registering the death

Before you register the death, you will need to know if you want to bury the body of the person who died in Qatar or bring it to the UK. Cremation is not possible in Qatar.

The death must be registered in person at the hospital or mortuary.

You will need information and documents about you and the person who has died, including:

- the British passport of the person who died
- your ID card or passport
- a death registration form – you will be given this form to complete
- a notification of death report issued by a doctor

The British Embassy can help you with the steps in this guide:

British Embassy in Doha  
Telephone: +974 4496 2000

## Getting a death certificate

After registering the death, you will get a death certificate. The next of kin, the sponsor or an insurance company can do this.

You will also get an embalming and sealing certificate if you want to take the body outside Qatar.

The Humanitarian Services Office receives and issues documents necessary for burial in Qatar and repatriation free of charge. The office is open 7 days a week from 7am to 6pm and is located behind Hamad Hospital mortuary.

You will need information and documents about you and the person who has died, including:

- the British passport of the person who died
- your ID card or passport

- the completed death registration form
- the notification of death report issued by a doctor

The death certificate will be in English and Arabic. It's worth asking for extra copies, as you might need them to show to people later.

## **Post mortems in Qatar**

A post mortem is a medical examination of the body. Under Islamic law, a body should be buried as soon as possible after death, so routine post-mortem examinations are not common. However, they may be carried out depending on the circumstances of the death.

In criminal cases or where the death occurred in unusual or suspicious circumstances (unnatural causes), the Qatari authorities may authorise a post mortem as part of their investigation without the family's consent.

Cultural or religious sensitivities may not be taken into account. If you would like more information on the procedure, you can ask the pathologist at the mortuary.

Post-mortem reports are not usually given to the next of kin. The UK Coroner (England and Wales) or Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (Scotland) may request a copy if it's needed for an inquest.

There are strict laws around organ donation in Qatar. Organs can normally only be removed with permission from the next of kin, even if the person who died was a registered donor.

## **Identifying the body**

Before the body is buried or repatriated, someone known to the person who died must identify the body. This should be next of kin or the sponsor.

The experience of viewing a body may differ from what you might encounter in the UK. Cultural practices, procedures and facilities vary, affecting the experience. This can be distressing. Speak to a consular officer for further information.

## **Cancelling Qatari residency**

If the person who died was a Qatar resident, you will need these documents to cancel their residency:

- death certificate
- residence permit cancellation application
- copy of sponsor's ID
- ID card and passport of the person who died

## **Getting authorisation letters**

The Qatari police will issue either a burial authorisation or a transfer of dead body certificate. To get one of these, you'll need to show the police:

- death certificate

- embalming and sealing certificate (for repatriations only)
- notification of death report
- passport of the person who died
- your ID card or passport

Before you can bury or repatriate the person's body, you must get a no objection letter from the British Embassy in Doha. You'll need the:

- death certificate
- passport of the person who died
- your ID card or passport

When you apply for a no objection letter, the British Embassy will cancel the passport of the person who died. The embassy will keep the cancelled passport if you are burying the body in Qatar or return it if you are repatriating the body. You should take copies before this happens. You may need to use the uncanceled passport for other matters such as closing bank accounts before you bring it to the embassy.

## **Burying the body in Qatar**

The Qatari authorities arrange burials. The mortuary will assist you with this.

There are many Islamic cemeteries in Qatar. The only non-Muslim cemetery is in Dukhan. The Qatari authorities may transport the body to the site free of charge. The family or sponsor of the person who died must pay for a coffin and the digging of a grave.

It is not possible to exhume a body in Qatar.

## **Bringing the body to the UK**

Ask your international repatriation company and airline about options for bringing the person's body to the UK from Qatar.

When taking the body to the UK from Qatar you will need to:

- show the death certificate
- show the embalming and sealing certificate
- show the transfer of dead body certificate from Qatari police
- show the passport of the person who died
- show the no objection letter from the British Embassy in Doha
- appoint a funeral director in the UK to collect the body from the airport

You can appoint an international funeral director or a repatriation company to arrange repatriation and receipt of the body in the UK. You can also make arrangements directly with an airline.

If you are arranging directly through Qatar Airways, follow these steps:

1. Eight to 24 hours before departure tell the mortuary the flight details and departure time.
2. Ask the mortuary to book an ambulance for at least 3 hours before the flight leaves.
3. Six hours before departure, take originals and copies of all paperwork received so far, including the passport of the person who died and flight reservations to immigration at the Qatar airways crew building (QROC), to get an exit stamp. Officers will put an exit stamp on

the death certificate airway bill and embalming certificate. It is important that the date of the stamp is the same as the date of the flight.

4. Report to customs at the Qatar airways cargo building to get permission to ship the person's body. The officer on duty will put an exit stamp and signature on the embalming certificate and airways bill.
5. Report to the cargo department with all the documents issued, including the airway bill of lading and the passport of the person who died with the exit stamp. An agent should place the documents in an envelope to accompany the person's body to the final destination.
6. Report back to mortuary with the original signed documents from immigration and customs as a final approval.

If you are using another airline, contact them for more information.

The procedure for bringing the body to a country other than UK is generally the same.

## **Getting the person's belongings back**

Belongings the person had with them when they died are normally given to you or the Qatari police.

If you bring the person's body to the UK, either the sponsor or a family member can collect all the belongings and transport them together.

Clothing and other belongings, such as mobile phones, may be kept as evidence if there is an investigation into the death. This will only be returned when the court case is over.

## **Finding an Arabic translator**

You may need a translator to help you understand Qatari rules or get documents translated. Check official translators in Qatar. The embassy or consulate in Qatar cannot provide translation services or pay for translation costs.

## **Finding a lawyer in Qatar**

You may need a lawyer to help you understand the Qatari legal system when someone has died. Check English-speaking lawyers in Qatar. The embassy or consulate in Qatar cannot give you legal advice or pay for legal costs.

## **Telling the UK authorities**

Although you do not have to register the death in the UK, when someone dies abroad you still need to tell the UK authorities. Read general guidance on what to do when someone dies abroad to find out what to do.

## **Contacting the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)**

You can contact the FCDO if you still need advice:

- in the UK call +44 (0)20 7008 5000
- see how to get help from the UK government abroad

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-someone-dies-in-qatar>