

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS REPORT: LATVIA

(Updated in May 2017)

The Disposition of Remains Report describes the local requirements for burial, cremation, embalming, preparation of remains for shipment, transportation to the United States, exhumation of remains, the price range for each service, and similar relevant information.

The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Riga updates the report **every three years**. The report is prepared based on local laws, European Union requirements, and information provided by various mortuaries in Latvia.

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1. Maximum Period Before Burial

Latvian laws provide for the body to be cremated or buried no earlier than 24 hours after the death occurred. There is no other time limit for burial defined by laws. In most cases, remains are buried within five or six days and are not embalmed. Embalming usually delays the burial.

The majority of hospitals in Riga have adequate mortuary facilities. Hospitals in smaller cities generally have some kind of mortuary. Hospitals in rural areas normally have access to mortuary facilities off premises.

2. Embalming

Embalming facilities are available in larger cities in Latvia.

There is no time limit for carrying out embalming, but representatives of local mortuaries have

indicated that it is preferable to embalm a body as soon as possible if the remains have to be transported overseas.

3. Cremation

Cremation of remains is permitted in Latvia, except in cases of death with unknown circumstances and when the autopsy is performed by the State Forensic Medical center (see Section 9 below for more information on autopsies). A waiver for prohibition to cremate remains may be requested from Latvian law enforcement agencies (usually, the Prosecutor's office).

The Crematorium is located in Riga (Address: 3 Varonu Str., Riga, LV-1005; website: <http://www.rigaskrematorija.lv>).

Cremation expenses (fees include cremation and cremation certificate):

- urn available in a week's time - 280.00 EUR (approx. 315.00 USD);
- express service, urn available in 24 hours - 380.00 EUR (approx. 428.00 USD)

Traditionally, a cross sign is engraved on the urn/capsule. Families requesting cremation must inform the Crematorium officials in a timely manner if their preference is different.

4. Caskets and Containers

The body is first embalmed or cremated when remains are to be transported out of the country. Caskets and urns both are available locally for transportation of ashes or remains.

A zinc casket placed in a special wooden case is used for shipping a body overseas by air-transport.

An urn with ashes may only be transported as carry-on hand luggage or sent as air-cargo. Urns cannot be sent by express mail, like DHL, UPS, and FedEx.

5. Documentary Requirements for Exportation of Ashes or Remains

For exporting human remains from Latvia, the following documents must be obtained:

1. Latvian Death Certificate ([issued by a local branch of Civil Register of Latvia](#));
2. Doctor's or Funeral Director's Embalming Certificate;
3. Remains Export Authorization from Latvian State Forensic Medical Center;
4. Export Authorization Certificate from Latvian Public Health Agency;
5. Consular Report of Death (issued by the U.S. Embassy in Riga, Latvia, based on the Latvian Death Certificate);
6. Consular Mortuary Certificate (issued by the U.S. Embassy in Riga).

For exporting ashes from Latvia, the following documents must be obtained:

1. Latvian Death Certificate (issued by a local branch of Civil Register of Latvia);
2. Cremation Certificate/Urn Letter (issued by the Crematorium);
3. Consular Report of Death (issued by the U.S. Embassy in Riga, Latvia, based on the Latvian Death Certificate);

4. Consular Mortuary Certificate (issued by the U.S. Embassy in Riga).

6. Shipment of remains overseas

Shipment of remains overseas is a rare experience for funeral homes in Latvia. However, they usually are aware and are ready to assist with necessary arrangements for exportation of remains.

A zinc casket placed in a special wooden case is used for shipping overseas a body of a deceased by air-transport.

An urn with ashes may only be transported as a carry-on hand luggage or sent as air-cargo. Urns cannot be sent by express mail, like DHL, UPS, and FedEx.

7. Costs

All expenses usually have to be settled in Euros (EUR). We have compiled information about average costs in EUR and indicated an approximate equivalent in U.S. dollars (USD) based on the exchange rate at the time of the last update. 1.00 USD = 0.889 EUR.

- Embalming – 285 EUR (321 USD). Fees include embalming and doctor's/funeral director's certification.
- Local burial – 785 EUR (884 USD). Fees include collection and transportation of remains, simple casket, funeral home charges, administrative fees, brief service and burial in a public cemetery.
- Cremation and disposal of ashes – 1425 EUR (1,603 USD). Fees include collection and transportation of cremated remains, doctor's certificate, urn crematorium fee, administrative fees, and a brief service.
- Preparation and shipment of human remains overseas – 7123 EUR (8013 USD). Fees include embalming, collection of remains, documentation costs, wood casket, zinc casket, and U.S. regulation shipping container. **Additionally**, airfreight charges are determined by the airline according to a special cargo rate after the remains are accepted for shipment. Note that approximate weight of a casket prepared for shipping is 200 kg (~440 lbs) for an adult and 100 kg (~220 lbs) for a child. The cost per kg might range from 6 to 10 USD.
- Preparation and shipment of ashes overseas – 1000 EUR (1,125 USD). Fees include cremation, collection of ashes, documentation costs, and packaging for shipment. **Additionally**, air-cargo charges apply and on average may be about 357 EUR (402 USD). If one brings an urn as their carry-on hand luggage, they should note that, on average, an urn containing ashes weighs 5 kg.

8. Exhumation

Regulations in Latvia provide that a body may be exhumed after it has been interred for one year, except for cases of death caused by a contagious disease (plague and anthrax).

When necessary, an application for exhumation must be made to the Prosecutor General of Latvia and to the State Public Health Agency. U.S. citizens may contact the Consular Section of the embassy if they require any assistance.

9. Autopsies

The cost is 232 EUR (260 USD) plus the cost of a number of tissue samples taken for examination, ranging from 6 EUR (6,8 USD) to 45 EUR (51 USD) per sample.

There are several types of autopsies:

- Judicial autopsy (always required in cases of a criminal). In most cases it is performed by the State Forensic Medical Center. The full autopsy report is usually ready within one month after it is performed; however, the report itself is not released to the family. Next-of-kin may only request that the case investigator provide them with available autopsy details.
- Medical/pathological autopsy (necessary or requested by next-of-kin for establishing or confirming cause of death). The full autopsy report is ready within one month after it is performed; however, it is not released to the family. Next-of-kin may only request that the medical doctor or hospital provide them with available autopsy details.

Often local authorities require an autopsy to confirm a cause of death. Autopsies must be done as soon as possible after death occurs; therefore, a next-of-kin wishing that it does not take place must notify the funeral home, hospital, or morgue where the body is held about their wish in writing as early as possible.

10. Religions in Latvia, Local Customs Regarding Funerals and Disposition of Remains

Latvia has no official religion. Most of the population practicing religion is Lutheran. Catholicism prevails in the eastern part of Latvia. Russian Orthodox and Old Believer communities are also significant.

Local burial is the most common way of disposition of remains in Latvia. However, cremation is also possible. The only crematorium is located in Riga.

A traditional Latvian funeral includes a funeral ceremony, cremation or burial of a deceased, and a brief memorial dinner at the end. The funeral ceremony usually takes place at a mourning facility of a cemetery where an open casket with the deceased is placed. Mourners traditionally bring to the funeral ceremony an even number of flowers and wreaths made of fir-twigs and flowers. The memorial dinner is organized by the family of the deceased at their home or their chosen cafe or restaurant. Although attending a funeral ceremony is possible for anyone, only those invited may attend the memorial dinner.

11. Other information

It is traditional that the funeral takes place within 5-6 days after the death occurs. Thus the funeral service providers expect to discuss details for funeral arrangements very soon after death occurs. If a decision on the disposition of remains needs to be delayed, the funeral home must be informed as soon as possible so the remains are prepared and stored accordingly.

Most funeral homes in Latvia expect cash payment, especially those located outside Riga. Some advance payment is often required. Nevertheless, funeral homes are legal entities and, as such, they have bank accounts enabling them to accept wire-transfers from overseas when necessary.

12. List of funeral service providers

We have compiled a list of funeral service providers in different regions of Latvia for your convenience. You may also obtain contact information for funeral service providers by calling public information service at 1188 or searching their website: www.1188.lv.

Note that the language barrier may be an issue when communicating with local funeral service providers.

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Riga region

Name: Latona Ltd
 Address: 58 Gertrudes Str.,
 City: Riga
 Telephone: + 371 29234962; +371 67285298
 E-mail: latona-ltd@inbox.lv; martins@tvnet.lv
 Website: <http://www.latona-ltd.lv>

Name: Rīgas Kremācijas centrs SIA (Crematorium)
 Address: 3a Varonu Str.,
 City: Riga
 Telephone: +371 67367062; +371 26346612
 E-mail: E-mail: krematorija@apollo.lv
 Website: <http://www.rigaskrematorija.lv>

Name: Sēras
 Address: 76 Miera Str.,
 City: Riga
 Telephone: +371 67370605; +371 29110583
 E-mail: seras1@inbox.lv
 Website: <http://www.seras.lv>

Name: Svecēs
 Address: 9 Klusa Str.,
 City: Riga
 Telephone: +371 67370477; +371 29119622
 E-mail: sia.sveces@inbox.lv
 Website: <http://www.siasveces.lv>

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Eastern part of Latvia (Latgale)

Name: Apbedīšanas serviss
Address: 66 Varsavas Str.,
City: Daugavpils
Telephone: +371 65421244; +371 65436020

Name: Mirtetrim
Address: 16 Klusa Str.,
City: Daugavpils
Telephone: + 371 29799699; +371 65451099

Name: Rituāls
Address: 301a Brivibas Str.,
City: Jekabpils
Telephone: + 371 29159430; +371 28662865
E-mail: ikneiko@inbox.lv
Website: www.rituals.lv

Name: Brūklenājs
Address: 283 Brivibas Str.,
City: Jekabpils
Telephone: +371 29478472
E-mail: apb.bruklenajs@inbox.lv

Name: Lokus
Address: 41a 18.Novembra Str.,
City: Rezekne
Telephone: + 371 29172131; +371 26400828

Name: Dana
Address: 10 K.Barona Str.,
City: Rezekne
Telephone: + 371 64621001; +371 64621700
E-mail: info@dana.lv
Website: www.dana.lv

Northern part of Latvia (Vidzeme)

Name: Kapsetu parvalde
Address: 13 Valnu Str.,
City: Cesis
Telephone: Tel: +371 29430173
E-mail: info@kapsetuparvalde.lv
Website: www.kapsetuparvalde.lv

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Name: Smiltājs K
 Address: 33 Rigas Str.,
 City: Gulbene
 Telephone: + 371 22034455

Northern part of Latvia (Vidzeme) - continued

Name: Akmens Carnik
 Address: 68 Rigas Str.,
 City: Gulbene
 Telephone: + 371 26012807; +371 64472786
 E-mail: icareva@inbox.lv

Name: Atvadas
 Address: 3a Kalna prospekts,
 City: Ogre
 Telephone: +371 65047923; +371 26861007
 E-mail: atvadasogre@inbox.lv

Name: Apbedīšanas nams - Krematorija (Crematorium)
 Address: Koceni, Valmiera region
 City: Valmiera
 Telephone: +371 20018333; (Riga) +371 20888989 (Vidzeme region)
 E-mail: E-mail: info@krematorija.lv; riga@krematorija.lv
 Website: <http://krematorija.lv>

Name: Orks
 Address: 37 Rigas Str.,
 City: Valmiera
 Telephone: + 371 29117686
 E-mail: info@orks.lv

Southern part of Latvia (Zemgale)

Name: Atmiņa
 Address: 13e Birzu Str.,
 City: Bauska
 Telephone: + 371 26481414
 E-mail: apbbauska@inbox.lv

Name: VK Vita
 Address: 4a Pludona Str.,
 City: Bauska
 Telephone: + 371 28377045
 E-mail: vkvita@delfi.lv

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Name: Marmorials
Address: 23 Dobeles Rd.,
City: Jelgava
Telephone: + 371 63080394; +371 29571752

Name: Korad
Address: 36 Raina Str.,
City: Jelgava
Telephone: +371 29456819; + 371 63083833
E-mail: korad@inbox.lv

Western part of Latvia (Kurzeme)

Name: Kuldīgas apbedīšanas birojs
Address: 6 Balozu Str.,
City: Kuldīga
Telephone: +371 25561227; + 371 28666270
E-mail: <http://apbedisanakuldiga.lv>
Website: apbedisana@kuldiga.lv

Name: Klusums
Address: 45 Inženieru Str.,
City: Ventspils
Telephone: + 371 63622309
E-mail: djuma4@gmail.com

Name: Rieta
Address: 21 Saules Str.,
City: Ventspils
Telephone: + 371 63628096; +371 29221355

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