

Process for Dealing with Death in Chiang Mai (for an Australian) 14 May 2018

Disclaimer: this information is based on personal experience, verified with research, but no claim is made for its accuracy. It is held to be current at time of writing. You should always verify the accuracy of these important processes with the organisations which administer them.

A. Administration - Documents

❖ If death happens **in hospital**. (based on death in Sriphat Hospital)

- ✓ Always have the deceased's passport (and Yellow book or Thai ID, if relevant) + multiple copies on hand of this for all following steps
- 1. A short unofficial notice of death and medical report may be issued from the ward
- 2. Inform the Australian Embassy Bangkok, Consular Section (02 344 6300) and/or Honorary Consul (091 857 6996) of the death. The hospital may have done this, but you should as well.
- 3. An Australian Embassy Case Officer is appointed for each death and it best to record the name, email address and mobile phone number of that officer for future use
- 4. If possible email scanned copies of the deceased's Passport, the next of Kin's Passport and the Thai Death certificate (once obtained - translation not needed) to the Embassy Case Officer.
- 5. Go to the hospital administration office/accounts/cashier the next day or some hours after the death
- 6. Pay all outstanding medical bills
- 7. The hospital will issue an official Notice of Death
- 8. This then needs to be taken to the Tessabaan for the official Thai Death Certificate to be issued
- 9. The hospital will advise which Tessaban is correct - this depends on the location of the hospital, not the deceased's home location
- 10. The Tessabaan will issue one official Original Death Certificate + 2 certified copies
 - a. You should make good quality colour copies of the official Original Certificate
- 11. Take the Thai Death Certificate for official translation. Star Visa is an often-used translation service (they are used to doing these documents, are quick and are not excessively expensive) but there are a number in Chiang Mai. Many are associated with the offices of lawyers who provide visa services.
- 12. The deceased's Thai Visa (retirement visa) needs to be cancelled by the Chiang Mai Immigration Office. There is a special office that does this. Ask at the general enquires desk for guidance. You should take the passport + originals and copies of all documents with you. It can take 2 days and there is no cost.
- 13. Take the original Thai Death Certificate + Translation + Passport to the Legalisation Office of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Government office complex on Chotana Road. The Legalisation Office is next to the Passport office on the ground level.

14. The Legalization Office will create the 'official' Legalised Death Certificate for a foreigner
15. A next-of-kin (you need to prove this status with a passport and if possible, birth certificate) needs to submit these documents for the Legalised Death Certificate.
16. If there is no next-of-kin available, a statutory declaration witnessed by the Australian Embassy (not a JP) is required. This can be witnessed at the Australian Embassy in Bangkok or at an Embassy Outreach Consular visit to Chiang Mai.
17. There is suggested wording for this statutory declaration appended to this document.
18. Once the Legalised Death Certificate is issued this document + the original or a certified copy of the Thai Death Certificate must then be taken physically to the Australian Embassy in Bangkok for a final Australian Legalisation. You should check if this can be done at an Embassy Outreach Consular visit to Chiang Mai.
19. This 'package' the Thai Legalised Death Certificate + the Death Certificate + the official translation of the Thai Death Certificate + Australian Legalized Death Certificate = **The Documents Needed** for all legal purposes in Australia (registration of the death, probate for the Will etc.)
20. The Australian Passport also needs to be cancelled. This can be done when the package described in #18 is taken to the Australian Embassy in Bangkok or it can be done at an Embassy Outreach Consular visits to Chiang Mai.
21. Plan on 2 days in Bangkok for the legalisation of the death certificate by the Australian Embassy process.

❖ If death happens **at home**

1. Other than contacting the Australian Embassy Bangkok, Consular Section (02 344 6300) and/or Honorary Consul (091 857 6996):
 - a. Contact the local police or the Central Chiang Mai Police Station where there are Foreign Police Liaison Officers. (053 276040)
2. The police will decide based on the circumstances if there needs to be an autopsy and the body need to go to the morgue.
3. Unless things are in place (for example the local temple (Wat) has been contacted to provide a refrigerator casket) it is likely the body will be sent to the mortuary at Suandok/Sriphat

B. Administration - The Person

1. Assuming the body is taken to mortuary.
2. Plans about what will be done once the body is released need to be decided.
3. Each local temple (Wat) can provide a refrigerated casket that can be used if the body is taken home for Buddhist blessings or a wake before cremation.
4. Instructions left with the next-of-kin or your local attorney will make decisions easier

5. Once the body is ready for release from the mortuary the Australian Embassy needs to send an Authorisation for Release
 - a. They will do this by an email to your next-of-kin (if they are dealing with your affairs) + a fax to the mortuary at Suandok/Sriphat
6. Take your copy of the Authorisation for Release to the main administration office at the Maharaj Hospital Building (the one closest to Suthep Road, at the front of the Sriphat complex)
7. They will take you to the mortuary at the back of the complex.
 - a. There will be mortuary costs (payable either at the main administration office and/or the mortuary office) + there may be some extra items needed – cloth covers etc. that need to be paid for.
8. The deceased's instructions or the decision of the next-of-kin will determine how the body is dealt with after release from the mortuary.
9. If the body is cremated and some or all of the remains are taken back to Australia, the Australian Embassy needs to issue an **airline facilitation letter** for carrying of the ashes.
10. *A practical note.* A cremation (anywhere, not just in Thailand) does not produce 'ashes' it produces small bones. These must be ground into ashes. In Australia this is done in a heavy grinder. If the body is cremated in Thailand it is best to arrange with the crematorium workers to do this before picking up ashes and ask them to place the remains in the urn or container you provide
11. This airline facilitation letter should be requested before going to the Bangkok Embassy for the legalised death certificate (see A. #18 above)
12. The remains need to be in a sealable (screw lid) brass urn. Any Buddhist supply shop sells them, and they come in a variety of sizes
13. The person carrying the remains needs to contact the airline flying into Australia and inform them they will be carrying human remains and you have an airline facilitation letter from the Australian Embassy. They will instruct how the remains are to be carried (hand luggage, checked in luggage.)
14. The remains must be declared to Customs and Quarantine on arrival in Australia.

C. References:

Australian Embassy Bangkok (Death Case Management)

Tel: 02 344 0300 *ask for the Consular Service*

Email: consular.bangkok@dfat.gov.au

181 Wireless Rd, Khwaeng Lumpini,
Khet Pathum Wan, Krung Thep Maha Nakhon 10330

[Google Map](#)

24-hour Consular Emergency Centre: +61 2 6261 3305

Australian Consulate Chiang Mai (Reports to and Supports the Embassy)

Honorary Consul: Ron Elliot

Tel: 091 857 6996

Line: aushoncon

Email: australianconsulate.chiangmai@gmail.com

Website: <https://australianconsulatechiangmai.com/>

195/262 Moo Baan Sansaran 2 (Mod Chic), Soi 2/7
T. Banwaen, A. Hangdong, Chiang Mai 50230

[Google Map](#)

To check for dates of Embassy **Outreach Consular visits to Chiang Mai:**

<https://australianconsulatechiangmai.com/>

http://thailand.embassy.gov.au/bkok/Consular_Outreach_Visits.html

- Locating the Royal Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Chiang Mai Government Complex (Chiang Mai Provincial Government Centre) is on Chotana Road (the Mae Rim Road) past the Lanna Gold Club there is a very large entrance to the Government Centre/Offices on the left, outbound.

Looking straight ahead at the far end of the complex there is a very large 5 story building by itself. On the Ground Floor of this complex is the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The office you are likely looking for is the Legalization Office. This is next to the Passport office.

A Thai person there for the passport office will help you find it.

[Google Map](#)

- Suggested wording for a Statutory Declaration where a next of kin is not in Chiang Mai to request legalisation of the death certificate:

My name is #####, Australian Passport #####

This declaration pertains to the death of #####, Australian Passport #####.

died on ###.

has no next-of-kin in Thailand.

His/her family in Australia are unable to travel to Thailand.

His/her family have requested I act on their behalf to assist in securing a legalized copy of the Thailand Death Certificate and translation of this Certificate from the Legalisation Office of the Royal Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs.