

# Process for Dealing with Death in Chiang Mai (for an Australian)

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**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 and Process

Many processes are easier if the person performing them is next of kin or the spouse of the deceased.

If a person dies without either of these present or unable to come to Chiang Mai in a few days, then it is recommend asking the next of kin to email the Australian Embassy giving permission for someone (you) to act on behalf of the deceased's family.

This email should state full details of the deceased (name, passport number etc.) and your name and passport number

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

- ✓ If the death occurs in another hospital (not Suandok/Sriphat) and an autopsy is needed, the body will be likely transported to the morgue at Suandok/Sriphat.
  - ✓ Other large hospitals (such as Nakornping) also have a morgue.
  - ✓ Always have the deceased's passport (and Yellow book or Thai ID, if relevant) + multiple copies of each document on hand of this for all following steps
1. A short notice of death and medical report may be issued from the ward and from the hospital administration
  2. Inform the Australian Embassy Bangkok, Consular Section (02 344 6300) 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 (this may vary in different hospitals)
  8. This then needs to be taken to the Muang Chiang Mai District Office for the official Thai Death Certificate to be issued
  9. The hospital will confirm if the Muang Chiang Mai District Office ([Google Map](#)) or a local Tessaban, Amphur or Tambon is correct - this depends on the location of the hospital, not the deceased's home location.

10. The Muang Chiang Mai District Office or Tessabaan Amphur or Tambon 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 (near the Airport). There is a special office/desk 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 Central Chiang Mai Airport Shopping Center, 5th Floor (Robinson Side). [Google Map](#)
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. There is suggested wording for this statutory declaration appended to this document.
17. Once the Legalised Death Certificate is issued this document + the certified copy of the Thai Death Certificate issued with the original + the passport (for cancellation by the Embassy) + a copy of the passport must be put together
18. This 'package' is sent to the to the Australian Embassy in Bangkok for a final Australian Certification or Legalisation.
19. Whether the Death Certificate package needs to be Certified by the Embassy or needs full Legalisation and Authentication depends on the circumstance of the deceased. The Executor of the Will in Australia should be consulted.

If the deceased has a substantial estate in Australia and probate needs to be applied for Legalisation and Authentication will be required and the Embassy needs to know this.

The Embassy provides certified true copies of documents to the deceased's family as a courtesy (no costs)

The Legalisation and Authentication service (with ribbon binding with Embassy seal), will have a cost and you will need to complete a credit card authorisation form sent from the Embassy.
20. Check with the Embassy Consular Section (02 344 6300) first to save double handling and extra costs.
21. This 'package' the Thai Legalised Death Certificate + the Death Certificate + the official translation of the Thai Death Certificate + Australian Certified or Legalized Death Certificate = **The Documents Needed** for all legal purposes in Australia (registration of the death, probate for the Will etc.)

22. If you plan to do this process at the Australian Embassy in Bangkok plan on it taking 2 days

❖ If death happens **at home**

1. Other than contacting the Australian Embassy Bangkok, Consular Section (02 344 6300):
  - 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 if the body needs to go to the morgue/mortuary at Suandok or another hospital.
3. The police will report the death as standard procedure, to the Australian Embassy Bangkok but it best to do this independently as well.
4. Unless things are in place (for example the local temple (Wat) or the local municipal authority has been contacted to provide a refrigerator casket) it is likely the body will be sent to the morgue/mortuary at Suandok.

**B. Administration - The Person**

1. Assuming the body is taken to morgue/mortuary at Suandok.
2. Plans about what will be done once the body is released need to be decided.
3. Each local temple (Wat) or perhaps the local municipal authority can provide a refrigerated casket that can be used if the body is taken home for Buddhist blessings or a wake before cremation or remain in temple for a funeral.
4. For committal and cremation services not at a temple contact McKean Seniors Centre. [Committal Service and Cremation – Mckean Senior Center](#)
5. Instructions left with the next-of-kin or your local attorney will make decisions easier.
6. Once the body is ready for release from the morgue/mortuary at Suandok 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 or email to the hospital administration office/mortuary at Suandok.
7. 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)
8. They will take you to the morgue/mortuary at the back of the complex.
  - b. 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.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. *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
12. This airline facilitation letter should be requested before going to the Bangkok Embassy for the legalised death certificate
13. The ashes should be carried in a well-sealed plastic container that can be x-rayed. (not in a brass cremation urn)
14. 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 (generally as hand luggage)
15. The remains must be declared to Customs and Quarantine on arrival in Australia.

### **C. References:**

**Australian Embassy Bangkok (Death Case Management)** [Google Map](#)

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

Email: [consular.bangkok@dfat.gov.au](mailto:consular.bangkok@dfat.gov.au)

181 Soi ArunMcKinnon  
Lumphini, Pathumwan  
Bangkok 10330

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

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

<https://australianconsulatechiangmai.com/>

**The Muang Chiang Mai District Office (for issuing of Thai Death Certificate)** [Google Map](#)

Confirm with the hospital which Office/Tessabaan/Amphur will issue the Death Certificate

*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 on the left there is new Thai style white 2 storey building with parking at the front There is a distinctive sign at the front which is two elephants holding up a log.*

**Royal Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Legalisation Office of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Central Chiang Mai Airport Shopping Center, 5th Floor (Robinson Side). [Google Map](#)

**Suggested wording for a Statutory Declaration (witnessed by the Australian Embassy) 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.*

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**If you have any updates** or more information, or if you see any inaccuracies, please do let me know so this guide can be as correct as possible

Neil

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