

Disposition of Remains Report: Minsk

Update April 7, 2020

Part I.

Name of Country- Belarus

Part II. U.S. Embassy or Consulate Information

U.S. Embassy Minsk

Address: 46 Starovilenskaya St., Minsk 220002, Belarus

Tel.: +375 17 210-12-83 / 217-7347 / 217-7348

Fax: +375 17 334-78-53

After Hours Phone +375-29-676-0134 (Duty Officer)

e-mail: ConsularMinsk@state.gov

[U.S. Embassy Website](#)

[State Department Country Specific Information](#)

[Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)

Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.

Belarus Religions

Approximately 53 percent of the adult population belongs to the Belarusian Orthodox Church and 6 percent to the Roman Catholic Church. Eight percent of the adult population is atheist, and 22 percent are not affiliated with any religion. Smaller religious groups which constitute approximately 2 percent of the population include Jews; Muslims; Greek Catholics ("Uniates"); Old Believers (both those who practice their faith with priests, usually termed "priestist," and those who practice their faith without priests, usually termed "priestless"); and other Orthodox groups in addition to the Belarusian Orthodox Church . This 2 percent also includes Lutherans, Jehovah's Witnesses, Apostolic Christians, Presbyterians and other Protestant groups, Armenian Apostolics, Latin Catholics, ISKON, Bahais, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Buddhists. Jewish groups state there are between 30,000 and 40,000 Jews living in Belarus. Ethnic Poles, who constitute approximately 3 percent of the population, tend to be Roman Catholic.

Religious Activities For Visitors In Minsk

There are various opportunities for worship in English. A nondenominational International Christian Fellowship holds services in English each Sunday morning in a centrally located hall. A separate service for children is held concurrently and the services are followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments. People of many nationalities and faiths attend these services. Also, some local Roman Catholic parishes in Minsk hold Sunday services in English.

The Jewish community is small, with three synagogues in Minsk representing different denominations of Judaism. There is a large mosque in Minsk and a mosque in Ivie, Grodno Region.

Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services

Funerals typically include a funeral ceremony, a burial in a grave or cremation of the remains, a wake, and a periodic memorial service. Local customs depend on religion.

Local Law Governing Disposal of Personal Effects

Belarusian law provides for a six month waiting period before effects can be released to the NOK. This period is calculated to allow potential heirs (both foreign and local) time to claim their inheritance rights.

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Minsk, Belarus assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

PLEASE NOTE: CDC requirements for importing human remains depend upon if the body has been embalmed, cremated, or if the person died from a [quarantinable communicable disease](#).

At this time, COVID-19 is a quarantinable communicable disease in the United States and the remains must meet the standards for importation found in 42 Code of Federal Regulations Part 71.55 and may be cleared, released, and authorized for entry into the United States only under the following conditions:

- The remains are cremated; OR
- The remains are properly embalmed and placed in a hermetically sealed casket; OR
- The remains are accompanied by a permit issued by the CDC Director. The CDC permit (if applicable) must accompany the human remains at all times during shipment.
 - Permits for the importation of the remains of a person known or suspected to have died from a quarantinable communicable disease may be obtained through the CDC Division of Global Migration and

Quarantine by calling the CDC Emergency Operations Center at 770-488-7100 or emailing dgmqpolicyoffice@cdc.gov.

Please see [CDC's guidance](#) for additional information.

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Belarus:

Mortuaries are found in all major hospitals in every regional or district center but their capacities are limited. Mortuaries in district centers may not have freezer storage facilities.

Burial items are purchased at specialty shops, called "Ritualnye Usługi" [Ritual Services], some of which also provide certain funeral services (transportation of the body, burial site preparation, etc.) The largest state owned enterprise providing such services in Minsk is Spetskombinat [Specialized Combinatory Enterprise]. It is located in Olshevskogo 12 Street (phones # +375 17 204 3132, short number: 173, e-mail: speckombinat@bk.ru , website: <http://www.ritual-minsk.by/>). It is a 24 hour funeral service for Minsk residents (including foreigners who resided or died in Minsk). Spetskombinat does not provide embalming services but will offer contact details local morticians who do provide such services. Total cost for local interment, including organization, transportation, embalming, and coffin differs from city to city and is subject to change (the cost of these services in Minsk as of May 2019 starts at US \$ 500).

Relatives of the diseased (or another legal/physical entity in charge of the funeral) are entitled to receive a lump sum burial allowance (paid in cash) that is normally enough to cover pre-burial handling of the body and the burial itself at minimal rates (including the price of a coffin, transportation, burial and a temporary wooden cross/monument on the grave). This allowance can be obtained from the social benefit service of the local executive committee (city-, town-, village council) based on the death certificate. Only foreigners with permanent resident status in Belarus are entitled to the allowance only. Otherwise, no allowance will be paid. As per May 2019, the allowance is about US\$500 (BR 1056,9).

Belarusian law sometimes permits issuance of a death certificate without an autopsy based on an external examination of the body. This typically occurs in cases of death from natural causes, such as a previously diagnosed terminal disease. In order to the civil registrar's office is responsible for issuing death certificates. They require the deceased's passport and a report from the medical doctor who established the fact of death which should include the cause of death. In cases involving a violent death, the investigator may require a compulsory autopsy to establish the cause of death. In some exceptional cases, with the investigator's permission, the death certificate is issued prior to the autopsy based on an external examination of the body, but in such cases the cause of death is not indicated.

The morgue will store the body free of charge for up to 7 days from the time the cause of death was established. If the next of kin or other relatives have not been

identified, the body will be stored by the morgue free of charge for up to 45 days from the time the cause of death was established, after which it will be buried at the expense of the state or handed over to a medical school or a medical research facility.

Part V. Profile of services available in Belarus regarding preparation and shipment of remains:

Costs: All prices and costs in this report are cited in U.S. Dollars.

Embalming and body preparation can be done at a local mortuary. Some mortuaries, especially in district hospitals, do not provide this type of service officially, however, for a "tip" mortuary employees may embalm and prepare the body for viewing.

Cremation is permitted by national law. There is one crematorium which is located in Minsk. (address: Severnoye Kladbishche [Northern Cemetery]; phone # +375 17 512-61-99, +375 17 512 6128.) Crematorium officials should be notified at least three days prior to cremation. A sealed container (urn) with ashes will be ready for pick up no earlier than 6 days after cremation. In urgent cases, such as when the container needs to be shipped abroad, the ashes may be obtained within 24 hours after cremation. In order to perform cremation, the body should be partially embalmed. The total cost of cremation for non-residents is about \$200 (\$15-20 – urn , \$40 - fee for expedited cremation, \$130 – cremation, + \$10 – urn packing for exportation). Unclaimed urns are stored for 3 years after which the ashes are buried in a common grave.

Caskets and Containers are available from stores called "Ritual Services" throughout the country. Galvanized and tin/zinc coffins for transportation out of Belarus can be procured at Spetscombinat, which also provides welding services for international transportation of the body.

Before the body may be transported out of the country, it must be embalmed and placed in a galvanized tin/zinc coffin inside a wooden crate. The coffin with the body must be shipped no later than 5 days from the time it was sealed. Belarusian funeral homes do not provide international transportation services, so relatives or their representatives must arrange the export of the body. This can be done by contacting the airline directly or by hiring a cargo transportation company to pick up the body from the morgue, complete all necessary customs requirements, and work with the airline to transport the body to the U.S.

The following documents are required to repatriate the body to the U.S. from Belarus:

1. Official Death Certificate (issued by the local registrar's/vital records office in Belarus)
2. Affidavit by the local coroner (issued by the Embassy and signed by a local official)
3. Statement for customs of no extra enclosures in the coffin (issued and signed by Morgue director, local authorities representative, or an authorized welder).

4. Consular Mortuary Certificate (issued by the Embassy)
5. Certificate of possibility of re-burial in case of possible exhumation (issued by the local sanitary-epidemiological service).

Ashes cannot be transported from Belarus in checked or carryon luggage; they must be sent in a separate cargo shipment. The following documents are required to repatriate an urn with ashes to the U.S. from Belarus:

1. Official Death Certificate (Issued by the local registrar's/vital records office in Belarus)
2. Certificate of cremation (issued by Minsk Crematorium)
3. Statement for customs of no extra enclosures in the urn (issued and signed by Crematorium director, or by a local authorities representative, or by an authorized welder)
4. Certificate of possibility of re-burial if case of possible exhumation (issued by the local sanitary-epidemiological service).

Exhumation and re-burial is only permitted within the first 2 weeks of burial or at least 3 years after the burial (1 year in case of sand soils). According to Belarusian law exhumations should be performed in the cold season of the year (fall-winter-spring). Exhumation is performed by a specialized service (a state owned funeral service – there is one in every administrative territorial unit of Belarus) in the presence of a local sanitary-epidemiological service representative based on a) an appropriate permit obtained from the local city (town, village) council, b) the death certificate, and c) an application of the initiator of the exhumation (next of kin or other physical or legal entity).

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Please see [CDC's guidance](#) for additional information.

List of Funeral and Transportation Service Providers available in Belarus

- **Spetskombinat** 24 hour funeral service in Minsk
 - Olshevskogo 12 Street
 - phones # +375 17 204 3132, short number: 173,
 - e-mail: speckombinat@bk.ru ,
 - website: <http://www.ritual-minsk.by/>).

- **Severnoye Kladbishche** [Crematorium Services];
 - phone # +375 17 512-61-99, +375 17 512 6128.

- **Funeral agent Konstantin Poluyan**
Provides arrangements for international transportation to the United States

tel. +375296630332,
e-mail: k.poluyan@yandex.by

- **M&M** (Transportation and Haulage), tel. + 375 17 2684111:
Prices for transportation:

The company cannot provide the estimates, as they calculate the cost for transportation in every particular case where certain circumstances may influence the cost.

For transportation of HUM to USA next conditions needs to be followed:

All Human Remains must have a certificate signed by a Consul. The AWB must show the name and address of the funeral home handling the funeral arrangements.

If the Human Remains are cremated, the following items are required:
 - Death Certificate
 - Cremation Certificate
 - Certificate from the crematorium stating the container holds only the remains of the deceased.
If the Human Remains are not cremated, the following items are required:
 - Death Certificate
 - Consular Mortuary Certificate

- Coroner's Removal Certificate, if appropriate
- Affidavit from the funeral director, stating the body has been placed in a hermetically sealed casket, which contains only the body of the deceased and any necessary clothing and packing
- And if embalmed, an Embalming Certificate.

- **Lufthansa/Austrian Airlines Cargo**, tel. + 375 17 2791951:

All Human Remains must have a certificate signed by a Consul. The AWB must show the name and address of the funeral home handling the funeral arrangements.

If the Human Remains are cremated, the following items are required:

- Death Certificate
- Cremation Certificate
- Certificate from the crematorium stating the container holds only the remains of the deceased.

Transportation from Minsk can be done only for ashes. Planning for transportation must be done in advance to coordinate loading on requested flight.

Prices for transportation:

Urn transportation (\approx 10 kg) - \$240 (New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles)

AWB issue 20USD and Airfreight surcharge 0.88USD/kg

The information above is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile the data. The laws cited are the Burial and Funeral Procedures Law of the Republic of Belarus of November 12, 2001, Amendments to the Burial and Funeral Procedures Law of the Republic of Belarus No 237-3 of January 8, 2015, Resolution of the Ministry of Housing and Communal Services No 17 of June 10, 2016, resolution of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus No 90 of July 10, 2015, Presidential De ree No 360 of July 21, 2014 .