

**LEFTOVERS / INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT
CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CORPSES**
LEAGUE OF NATIONS

SIGNED AT BERLIN, FEBRUARY 10TH, 1937

Desirous of avoiding the difficulties resulting from differences in the regulations concerning the conveyance of corpses, and considering the convenience of laying down uniform regulations in the matter, the undersigned governments undertake to accept the entry into their territory, or the passage in transit through their territory, of the corpses of persons deceased on the territory of any one of the other contracting countries on condition that the following regulations are complied with:

A. GENERAL REGULATIONS

Article 1

For the conveyance of any corpse by any means and under any conditions, a special laissez-passer (laissez-passer for a corpse) complying as far as possible with the model annexed hereto, and in any case stating the surname, first name and age of the deceased person, and the place, date and cause of decease, shall be required; the said laissez-passer shall be issued by the competent authority for the place of decease or the place of burial in the cases of corpses exhumed.

It is recommended that the laissez-passer should be made out, not only in the language of the country issuing it, but also in at least one of the languages most frequently used in international relations.

Article 2

Neither the country of destination nor the countries of transit shall require, over and above such papers as are required under international conventions for the purpose of transports in general, any document other than the laissez-passer provided for in the preceding article. The said laissez-passer shall not be issued by the responsible authority, save on presentation of:

- (1) A certified true copy of the death certificate;
- (2) Official certificates to the effect that conveyance of the corpse is not open to objection from the point of view of health or from the medico-legal point of view, and that the corpse has been placed in a coffin in accordance with the regulations laid down in the present arrangement.

Article 3

Corpses must be placed in a metal coffin, the bottom of which has been covered with a layer of approximately 5 cm. of absorbent matter such as peat, sawdust, powdered charcoal or the like with the addition of

an antiseptic substance. Where the cause of decease was a contagious disease, the corpse itself shall be wrapped in a shroud soaked in an antiseptic solution.

The metal coffin must thereupon be hermetically closed (soldered) and fitted into a wooden coffin in such a manner as to preclude movement. The wooden coffin shall be of a thickness of not less than 3 cm.: its joints must be completely water-tight: and it must be closed by means of screws not more than 20 cm. distant from one another, and strengthened by metal hoops.

Article 4

Conveyances of the corpses of persons deceased by reason of plague, cholera, small-pox or typhus shall not be authorized as between the territories of the contracting parties until one year at the earliest after the decease.

B. SPECIAL REGULATIONS

Article 5

In the case of transport by rail, the following regulations shall apply over and above the general regulations contained in articles 1 to 4:

(a) Coffins must be conveyed in a closed wagon, save where they are handed over for conveyance in a closed hearse, and remain in the same.

(b) Each country shall be responsible for fixing the time limit within which the body must be removed on arrival. Where the consignor produces satisfactory proof that the corpse will effectively be removed within such time limit, the coffin need not be accompanied.

(c) No articles may be transported along with the coffin other than wreaths, bunches of flowers and the like.

(d) Coffins must be dispatched by the speediest route and, as far as possible, without trans-shipment.

Article 6

In the case of motor transport, the following regulations shall apply over and above the general regulations contained in articles 1 to 4:

(a) Coffins must be conveyed preferably in a special hearse or, failing such, in an ordinary closed van.

(b) No articles may be transported along with the coffin other than wreaths, bunches of flowers and the like.

Article 7

In the case of transport by air, the following regulations shall apply over and above the general regulations contained in articles 1 to 4:

(a) Coffins must be conveyed either in an aircraft specially and solely used for the purpose or in a special compartment solely reserved for the purpose in an ordinary aircraft.

(b) No articles may be transported along with the coffin in the same aircraft or in the same compartment, other than wreaths, bunches of flowers and the like.

Article 8

In the case of transport by sea, the following regulations shall apply over and above the general regulations contained in articles 1 to 4:

(a) The wooden coffin containing the metal coffin in accordance with the provisions of article 3 must itself be packed in an ordinary wooden case in such a manner as to preclude movement.

(b) The said case, with its contents, must be so placed as to exclude any contact with foodstuffs or articles for consumption and to preclude inconvenience to the passengers or crew of any kind.

Article 9

Where decease takes place on board ship, the body must be preserved under the same conditions as those provided for in article 8 above. The documents and certificates required under article 2 shall be made out in accordance with the law of the country whose flag the vessel flies, and transport shall take place in the same manner as in the case of a corpse shipped on board.

Where the decease takes place less than 48 hours before the arrival of the vessel in the port at which the burial is to take place, and the material required for the strict observance of the provisions laid down in paragraph (a) of article 8 is not available on board, the corpse, wrapped in a shroud soaked in an antiseptic solution, may

be placed in a coffin of solid wood of planks of not less than 3 cm. Thick with watertight joints, closed by screws. The bottom of the coffin must previously have been covered with a layer of approximately 5 cm. of absorbent material such as peat, sawdust, powdered charcoal or the like with the addition of an antiseptic substance. The coffin must thereupon be fitted into a wooden case in such a manner as to preclude movement. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply where death was due to one of the diseases specified in article 4.

This article shall not apply to vessels whose voyages do not exceed 24 hours, if in the event of a decease on board they hand over the corpse to the competent authorities as soon as they arrive at the port at which it is to be handed over.

C. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 10

The provisions, both general and specific, of the present arrangement embody the maximum requirements (other than in the matter of charges) which may be stipulated in connection with the acceptance of corpses coming from any one of the contracting countries. The said countries remain free to grant greater facilities, either by means of bilateral arrangements or by decisions in particular cases arrived at by common accord.

The present arrangement shall not apply to the conveyance of corpses between frontier districts.

Article 11

The present arrangement applies to international transport of corpses immediately after decease or exhumation. Nothing therein contained shall in any way affect the regulations in force in the respective countries in respect of burial and exhumation.

The present arrangement shall not apply to the transport of ashes.

LAISSEZ-PASSER FOR A CORPSE

All legal regulations concerning the placing in the coffin having been observed,
the corpse of
(name, first name and profession of the deceased; in the case of children, profession of father and mother)
deceased on at , by reason of (cause of decease),
at the age of years (exact date of birth if possible),
is to be conveyed (means of transport),
from (place of departure) via (route),
to (place of destination)

The transport of this corpse having been duly authorized, all and sundry authorities over whose territory the corpse is to be conveyed are requested to let it pass without let or hindrance.