



What if I Die in Mexico?

Many Canadian citizens work in Mexico or have retired to live here. As death is a natural part of life, it makes sense for those living here to prepare for the possibility that they may also die here. These tips will help you, your family and friends know what to do.

Plan in advance:

- Register for Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) at www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration.
- Always include an emergency contact name in your passport application form.
- Buy life insurance and review the company's policy about funeral arrangements. Give family and friends who may be beneficiaries of payments from your insurance or bank accounts the necessary documents and ask them to be prepared to provide identification and documents to prove your relationship.
- Appoint a representative who will act as the main point of contact with the Mexican authorities after your death and will be in charge of your funeral arrangements, credit cards, banking, insurance, etc. Inform this person that you are appointing him or her your representative so that he or she can be prepared.
- Make a notarized power of attorney for your representative. If he or she is not in Mexico, identify someone in Mexico who can care for your property and valuables until your representative arrives. If you choose to have the power of attorney prepared in Canada, this document must be legalized by the Embassy of Mexico in Canada, and then translated into Spanish for use in Mexico.
- Keep your original birth and marriage certificates where your representative will know where to find them. If they are Canadian documents, have them translated into Spanish and have them legalized/authenticated by the embassy or consulates of Mexico in Canada.
- Mexican authorities often request identification documents both for the deceased and for the family member or the representative collecting the body. Your representative should be prepared to provide the necessary passports, birth certificates and marriage certificates.
- Make your funeral preparations in advance, or clearly identify your wishes in your will. Some funeral homes, especially those in large expat communities, offer programs where you can pre-pay funeral services. These programs may sometimes help with post-death legal procedures as well.
- Make your will. If you have property or bank accounts in Mexico, you should have wills in both Mexico and Canada. Make sure your representative knows where to find them.
- When you open a bank account in Mexico, you must designate one or more beneficiaries. If you draw up a will after the bank account is opened and change your beneficiaries, it is very important to change them at the bank as well.
- Common-law relationships and same-sex marriages might not be recognized by Mexican authorities, and not all live-in partners are considered legal next of kin. Clearly indicate in your will if your partner is to be your representative to ensure that he or she will be able to carry out your wishes without problems. If your partner is not legally accepted as your next of kin, the Consulate can help to notify your next of kin.

After your death:

- In Mexico, only your legal next of kin can request interment/cremation services.
- If your remains are to be returned to Canada, make sure that you have identified funeral homes in both Mexico and Canada. If your ashes are to be repatriated, there is no need to contact a Canadian funeral home. Mexican funeral homes will expect payment in advance and your representative should be prepared to cover these costs if you have not already done so. Depending on your wishes, it could cost up to \$10,000 to repatriate your remains.
- An autopsy may be mandatory in Mexico, depending on the circumstances of your death. If you die of natural causes, having a familiar doctor at hand to sign the death certificate may help.
- The funeral home will provide your representative with one death certificate. Extra copies of the death certificate can be obtained through the funeral home for a fee. It is possible that institutions in Canada will request a certified copy of the death certificate (produced by the Mexican Civil Registry), and/or a translation from Spanish. It is therefore important that your representative obtains plenty of copies. The Canadian consulate does not provide death certificates, but can provide a list of official translators. The translation can also be done in Canada.
- Your representative should bring your passport to the Canadian Embassy or Consulate to be cancelled. They will return the cancelled passport to you on request. If there isn't an office nearby, you can have this procedure done at any passport office in Canada.
- The Consulate does not give legal advice nor can it intervene in private legal processes. To change the title or ownership of a property or settle an estate in Mexico, you should contact a local lawyer or notaria publica. The Canadian Consulate can provide a list of local lawyers.
- If you have any concerns, we recommended that you also seek legal advice in both Canada and Mexico. For more information on the consular services provided by the Embassy of Canada after a death abroad, please visit <https://travel.gc.ca/docs/publications/death-abroad.pdf> or <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/death-abroad>.