Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Death Certification Review Service

Deaths abroad | Handy guide for funeral directors and administration staff



The Death Certification Review Service (DCRS) is responsible for supporting the safe arrangement of a burial or cremation in Scotland if someone has died abroad.

You cannot bury or cremate a person who has died abroad without authorisation from DCRS.



We aim to approve repatriation to Scotland applications within five working days.

In exceptional circumstances this may take longer if a case requires reporting to the Procurator Fiscal or translation of documents is required.



As soon as you are made aware of a potential repatriation you should contact us.

Once DCRS have received the required paperwork and this is in order, we can progress the application.



A DCRS Medical Reviewer (an experienced doctor) will carry out a Level 2 review.

This includes reviewing the deceased's primary healthcare records and speaking to their GP.



Under Scottish legislation, if the death is sudden, suspicious or unexplained a report to the Procurator Fiscal may be required. The Medical Reviewer will let you know if this is needed.

When the Medical Reviewer is satisfied that the paperwork is in order, they will issue the required documents to proceed with funeral arrangements.