The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements to provide current data on Finnish law on the disposition of remains. Cost information is included based on responses from Helsinki funeral homes.

Part I. Country

Name of Country: Republic of Finland

Part II. U.S. Embassy Information

Address: U.S. Embassy Helsinki
          Itäinen Puistotie 14 B
          00140 Helsinki
          Finland

Phone: +358 9 616 250
After Hours Phone: +358 9 616 250 and select 0
Website: fi.usembassy.gov
Email: HelsinkiACS@state.gov

Country Information Travel Advisory

Register With U.S. Embassy Helsinki

Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services Available to Visitors.

Country Profile: Host Country Religions (From Background Notes)

Religions: As of the end of 2018, approximately 4 million or 75% of the population are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The second largest group, 21% of the population, has no religious affiliation. A small minority belong to the Finnish Orthodox Church (1.5%). Other Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church of Finland are significantly smaller (1%), as are the Muslim, Jewish and other non-Christian communities (totaling 1.5%).
Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Helsinki:

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy in Finland 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.

FUNERAL HOMES:

Armas Borg OY
Address: ANNANKATU 12
00120 HELSINKI

Tel: 358-9-6129890, 358-400 977 000 (24h)
Website: http://www.armasborg.fi/
Email: armas.borg@kolumbus.fi

Autio Oy
Runeberdinkatu 42
00260 Helsinki

Tel:358-9- 448 346 (24h)
Fax:358-9- 449 841
Website: https://hautaustoimistoautio.fi/
Email: info@hautaustoimistoautio.fi

Part V. Profile of Services Available in the Host Country Regarding Preparation and Shipment of Remains:

Both burial and cremation are common in Finland. Hospitals have refrigerated morgues. It is uncommon for funeral homes to have refrigerated morgues. Police and hospitals usually have local funeral home contacts available to assist families of deceased individuals. Autopsies are generally performed when a death occurs outside of a health care facility or is not due to natural causes.

1. Maximum Period Before Burial of Remains

There is no prescribed minimum or maximum period before burial. Usually bodies are buried within four to ten days from the date of death, especially when death occurs during the warm season. However, under special circumstances, a body may be held longer in the mortuary.
2. Embalming

Embalming is completed in Finland by injecting formaldehyde into the veins shortly after death. Embalming facilities exist in all major cities in the consular district.

3. Cremation

There are 22 crematories in Finland. Most crematories are located in every major city. The Helsinki crematories are operated by the Finnish Cremation Society and the other locations are owned and operated by their respective Lutheran church parishes. Before permitting cremation, the authorities require a certificate releasing the body for burial (hautaslupa). This certificate is issued by the Forensic Medical Unit performing the autopsy.

4. Caskets and Containers

Caskets and containers that are available locally meet requirements for the international shipment of remains. The appropriate Finnish law is as follows: “A body may NOT be transported from one locality to another except in a hermetically sealed metal casket or in a customary coffin which has been placed in a hermetically sealed metal box or in a wooden watertight box which has been tarred on the inside.”

5. Exportation of Human Remains

The following documents are required by authorities for the exportation of human remains:

1. Certificate releasing the body for burial (hautaslupa) issued by the Forensic Medical Unit performing the autopsy or by the hospital;

2. Embalming certificate;

3. Certificate issued by the Health Inspector showing that the casket is hermetically closed and sealed.

Estimated Costs: When remains are shipped from Finland back to the United States the following items generally charged - custom made casket, zinc casket, container, embalming, burial clothes, customs/transportation to airport, assistant’s fee, undertaker’s fee and document/certificates. The total cost for preparation and air shipment of remains to the East Coast of the United States is approximately 5,320 euros or approximately 6,120 euros to the West Coast. The average weight of a casket is about 200kg. Most funeral homes accept payment by credit card.
(6) Exportation of Human Remains/Ashes;

To export remains via ordinary parcel post or to transport remains by hand the following documents are needed:

1. By the Crematory: Certificate releasing the body for burial (hautauslupa) issued by the Forensic Medical Unit performing the autopsy or by the hospital.

2. The following documents must accompany ashes: Certificate of Cremation (tuhkauslupa) issued by the crematory and customs declaration form. The ashes must be also sealed by the crematory.

According to the local airport authority passengers transporting remains in their carry-on baggage are still subject to full security procedures. A sealed box/urn containing human remains will be x-rayed at the airport security checkpoint. If the urn is made of a material that prevents the x-ray screener from ascertaining its contents the container may not be permitted through the security check.

Estimated Costs: The estimated cost for cremation and disposition of ashes in Finland are approximately 1,700 euros which generally includes the fees for the casket, burial clothing, urn, cremation, and transportation from the morgue to the crematory. The estimated cost of cremation and air shipment of ashes to the East Coast of the United States is approximately 2,400 euros or approximately 2,700 euros to the West Coast. If ashes are returned to the United States by parcel post the fee is 1,700 euros plus the mailing fee of approximately 100 euros (total 1,800 euros). The average weight of an urn is approximately 6 kg. Most crematories accept payment by credit card.

*Charges shown are estimations and based on June 2019 exchange rate of $1.00 euro = 0.885 euros. All fees are approximate*