Laws regarding Disposition of Remains are national. Local regulations may differ in minor details only.

A. **MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE INTERMENT:**

Providing the remains are not a health hazard, there is no period set down in which burial must take place. The remains must be kept under prescribed conditions in the mortuary, which has responsibility for complying with the law.

B. **EMBALMING:**

Embalming is done in all major centers in South Africa. There are mobile embalming units available, which are taken to country areas, and neighboring countries, (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) where there are no facilities for embalming. The embalming standards in South Africa are high. Embalming should take place as soon after death as possible, but may not take place until the doctor has signed the death certificate.

C. **CREMATION:**

Cremation is permitted in South Africa. The family or their agent must instruct the mortician who arranges for all legally required documentation. In order to protect the interests of the deceased and their families, cremation requires extensive documentation and three death certificates which are issued at various stages of the documentation process by three different doctors. A doctor who has been qualified for at least ten years must issue the final certificate. If he refuses to sign the death certificate, an autopsy must be performed.

D. **CASKETS AND CONTAINERS:**

They are available locally and meet the requirements for shipment out of South Africa.

E. **EXPORTATION OF REMAINS:**

1. Ashes: Documents required to export ashes are as follows:
   a) Official Death Certificate
   b) Cremation Certificate
2. Human Remains: Documents required for the exportation of human remains are as follows:

   a) Embalming the remains (by the Mortician)
   b) Original Death Certificate
   c) Embalming Certificate
   d) Removal Order
   e) Health Certificate
   f) Mortician’s Affidavit
   g) Authority for import into country of destination
      (i.e. Consular Mortuary Certificate).

3. The body must be exported in a sealed, zinc lined coffin.

F. **COSTS:**

All dollar costs have been converted from the cost in local currency at the rate of exchange of SA Rand 14.00 to US Dollars 1.00.

1. Local interment without embalming (includes casket, documents, plot, etc.)
   - Minimum: US $1075.00
   - Maximum: US $2000.00
   - Average: US $1500.00

2. Embalming:
   - Fixed costs: US $1500.00

3. Burial Plot:
Costs differ greatly, average prices:

Resident: US $ 200.00  
Non Resident: US $600.00  

Purchase of plot: Garden or memorial section: N/A

4. Transportation of coffin to burial site:
   Included in burial costs.

5. Cremation (includes casket, documents, crematorium fee, etc.):
   Minimum: US $800.00  
   Maximum: US $1500.00  
   Average: US $1200.00  
   a) Air shipment of human ashes in container to New York:
      Minimum: US $600.00  
      Maximum: US $800.00  
   b) Air parcel post shipment of human ashes to the United States: N/A  
   c) Surface parcel post shipment of human ashes to the United States: N/A

6. Cost of air shipment of human remains in coffin (includes coffin,  
   embalming, documents, mortician, fees, metal lining, seal, transportation  
   to local airport including Air Freight average weight of 150Kg’s).
G. **EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT:**

Remains may not be exhumed for reburial until two years after burial – if deceased died of natural causes. If deceased died of some infectious disease, the remains may not be exhumed for reburial until five years burial. The family must instruct the funeral home and provided reason (reburial in country of nationality, etc.) for disinterment. The funeral home must, inter alia, obtain permission from the South African Department of Home Affairs, and also from local authorities. It would take approximately 8 weeks from receipt of the family's request until remains are ready for shipment. Approximate total cost is:

US $3500.00

H. **Autopsies**

**Anatomical pathology autopsy**

Anatomical autopsies are performed in terms of the Human Tissues Act to establish the nature of underlying natural disease and to teach and train healthcare professionals. Specific consent is required. It may also provide valuable information for the next of kin and closure in cases uncertainty, as well as providing information which may be of benefit to surviving family members (siblings and children, in case of certain familial diseases). Permission to perform an academic/anatomical pathology autopsy may be obtained from the deceased before his or her death or in terms of a will, or from his next of kin, after death has taken place.

**Medico-legal postmortem examinations**

These examinations are conducted primarily in terms of the Inquests Act, as part of the medico-legal investigation of deaths which may have been due to other than natural causes, and with the purpose of establishing the cause of death and factors associated with the death. Medico-legal autopsies are performed in terms of prescribed statutory provisions, which no consent being required from the next of kin and may only be performed by authorized medical practitioners (who have been specifically appointed such examinations).

Medico-legal autopsies are conducted in terms of (primarily) the Inquest Act and are mandated by law, thus requiring no consent from the next of kin.

There is strict adherence to legislative and ethical guidelines when an autopsy is conducted.

Sophisticated radiology techniques, together with other technological advances and investigative tools, are now used to augment or replace conventional autopsy dissection in some instances.