



## Body Donation for Plastination

# Guide for Survivors

*The following is intended as a basic and general information guide regarding the procedures for body donation from countries in Europe and other continents, except North and South America, so that the body will reach the Institute for Plastination (IfP) in a timely manner. Details of the procedures will vary from country to country. In case of any questions, survivors of body donors should contact a local mortuary for assistance and clarification.*

As a relative or trusted person of a body donor for plastination, you are being asked to help fulfill the last wishes of the deceased body donor and to complete the required paperwork, as well as to initiate rapid transportation of the body to Germany. This guide describes the required formal procedures and is intended to help you fulfill these tasks.

## IfP Contact Information

**In Europe and rest of the world** (except North and South America)

### Institute for Plastination

Body Donation Office

Rathausstrasse 11 · 69126 Heidelberg, Germany

Mon. - Fri. between  
9 a.m. and 4 p.m. (GMT +1)

Phone **+49 (0) 6221 33 11 50** · Fax **+49 (0) 6221 33 11 45**

Outside of normal office hours, please call **+49 (0) 160 74 55 188**

## **Procedures Required Immediately after Death Has Occurred**

If the donor died at home, you should call the primary physician of the deceased or another doctor on call, who will attest to the death and who will issue a written attestation of death. If the death occurred at a hospital or a care facility, the institution in question will take care of this task.

Next, a local mortuary of your choice should notify the body donor office at the Institute for Plastination (IfP) by phone as soon as possible to receive specific embalming instructions and coordinate the transport of the body to Germany.

Until the body is picked up by the mortician, you should take care that it is kept as cool as possible. This means:

- Avoid direct exposure to sunlight.
- Do not cover the body with warm blankets, but only a simple sheet at most.
- Turn off radiators/heating facilities, where applicable.
- Open windows (in case of cool temperatures outside).

## **Formal Procedures and Transportation**

Transportation will only take place after the death has been documented and registered according to all legal requirements. In most countries, except some European countries, it is required that the body be embalmed according to the instructions of the IfP prior to transportation. The mortuary assisting with the procedure should contact the IfP to receive the necessary instructions for embalming.

An original or a certified copy of the death certificate must be submitted to the IfP or the funeral home handling the transportation of the body. It will accompany the body to its final destination. The death certificate will remain with the IfP in our official records. The death certificate should be requested from your local office of vital records. Please note that you will need additional copies of the death certificate, e.g., for canceling the deceased's health insurance and retirement insurance. To obtain a death certificate, you must complete an application and submit it along with any other specified documents (e.g., the deceased's birth certificate). A local funeral home or mortuary may also assist you in obtaining a death certificate through the office of vital records. In most countries, states, or provinces, the person requesting the death certificate will need to present a government issued ID.

In addition to the death certificate, an international toe tag will be needed. The toe tag is only issued after the body has been sealed in a zinc coffin. The qualified physician in charge should approve the sealing. The mortuary can then assist with the transportation of the body across borders.

Any other required paperwork such as *pre-need disclosure* or an *embalming authorization* form is provided by a mortuary at time of death.

If you are unable to deal with these formal procedures yourself, you may choose to hire a local funeral home to do so. You will be responsible for the ensuing cost.

### Check List

- ✓ Call a physician who will attest to the death and issue a written attestation of the death.
- ✓ Notify a local mortuary of your choice that can coordinate the transport with the IfP.
- ✓ Keep the body as cool as possible until it is picked up by the mortician.
- ✓ Obtain an original or certified copy of the death certificate from the local office of vital records.
- ✓ Submit the death certificate and attestation of death to the mortuary or the company responsible for picking up the body.
- ✓ Complete any other required paperwork such as *pre-need disclosure* or an *embalming authorization form*.

## Costs

The IfP does not charge any fees. Until further notice, the IfP also will assume the cost of transporting bodies to the IfP from any city or airport in Germany. There are no burial costs nor costs of maintaining a grave. The survivors of the deceased will merely be responsible for:

- The administrative fees for filing and receiving the paperwork needed for the donation, including the issuing of the death certificate by the office of vital records.
- If necessary, the cost of temporarily transporting the body to a local mortuary.
- The cost of transporting the body to Germany.
- The cost for a memorial service, if one is desired.

To help cover these expenses, it is advisable to inquire about insurance the body donor may have taken out to cover those expenses.

## Prerequisites for Body Donation

- No autopsy by an institute of pathology or of forensic medicine may have been conducted on a body donated to the IfP. Severely injured bodies from accidents cannot be accepted for Plastination.
- Organ donation does not preclude Plastination. But even after individual organs have been removed, the body will be suitable for Plastination, provided that it is transported to the IfP immediately after organ removal.
- The presence of an infectious disease (e.g., hepatitis, HIV) does not present an obstacle either. However, it is absolutely necessary that the IfP is notified of such a condition prior to transportation.

*The donor's last will and testament, donating his/her body for Plastination, is not a contract, but rather a living will that can be revoked by either party at any time, without giving any reasons. There are no fees to be paid for donating a body, nor will donors or their survivors receive any monetary compensation. The Institute for Plastination (IfP) does not have a legal claim to the body, nor is the Institute legally required to accept the body.*

