



# CAPSCA AFRICA

## Transport of Human Remains

Johannesburg, October 13, 2015

Claude Thibeault MD  
IATA Medical Advisor

# Transport of human remains

Airport Handling Manual (AHM 333)

Handling of human remains

- Human remains procedure
- Handling of coffins
- Handling urns

# Transport of human remains

## Information from WHO regarding Ebola

“There is no scientific data on the survival of the Ebola virus in the dead bodies. Very scarce indirect evidence on the survival of the virus in the environment in general suggests that the virus may be able to survive in corpses for days and, probably, weeks, but that is just an assumption.”

# Handling of human remains

## Human remains procedure

Human remains (HUM), except cremated, must be packed in a hermetically sealed inner containment, which may be constructed of a flexible material or may be a rigid coffin of lead or zinc. The inner containment must then be packed inside a wooden or metal coffin. The wooden or metal coffin must be protected from damage by an outer packing and covered by canvas or tarpaulin so that the nature of its contents is not apparent.

Cremated remains must be shipped in funeral urns which are efficiently cushioned by suitable packing, against breakage.

# Handling of human remains

The provisions of AHM 333 largely align with the provisions of Article 6 of the Council of Europe Agreement for the packaging of human remains except that AHM 333 includes provisions for the use of an inner containment manufactured from a flexible material. These flexible materials are now widely available and are recognised by many States as being suitable to achieve the requirements for a hermetically sealed inner containment. In addition this flexible material avoids the problems with the use of lead or zinc, both of which are heavy, expensive and present difficulties as they must meet the requirements for environmental waste applicable in most States.

# Handling of human remains

## Handling coffins

Carriage of human remains in coffins on passenger and cargo aircraft are subject to the following conditions:

- Non-cremated HUM shall not be loaded in close proximity to foodstuffs (EAT)
- The pilot-in-command should be informed
- Stowage position on individual aircraft type shall be subject to company's regulations

# Handling of human remains

## Human remains (IATA proposal)

A Contracting State shall facilitate the prompt release of human remains being imported by air, provided that applicable laws and regulations governing the importation of human remains are complied with.

Note.— The advance notification, either in paper form or electronically, of the transport of human remains would likely facilitate the entry of human remains at the State of destination.

Human remains shall be accompanied by a laissez passer for a human remains, reproduced in Appendix 14 issued by the appropriate public authority of the State of origin.

# Handling of human remains

## Human remains (IATA proposal cont'd)

The laissez passer shall be issued by the appropriate public health authority referred to in, after it has ascertained that:

- a) all the medical, health, administrative and legal requirements of the regulations in force in the State of origin relating to the transfer of human remains and, where appropriate, burial and exhumation have been complied with;
- b) the remains have been placed in a coffin which complies with the requirements laid down in 4.62;
- c) the coffin only contains the remains of the person named in the laissez passer and such personal effects as are to be buried or cremated with the human remains.

# Handling of human remains

## Handling urns

Handling and loading as normal cargo

*Note: there appears to be no scientific or technical reasons why HUM and live animals (AVI) should be segregated in aircraft cargo compartments. However, it may be ethical for cultural reasons to segregate them.*



Thank you for your attention



- to represent, lead and serve the airline industry -