

Indiana Apostille Process Explainer for Funeral Homes and Coroners' Offices

This guide explains how to request an apostille from the Indiana Secretary of State for documents related to the international transit of human remains. An apostille is required to authenticate public documents (such as death certificates) for use in countries that are part of the Hague Apostille Convention. Our team appreciates the sensitivity required when dealing with the passing of a loved one and seeks to eliminate confusion that may exist around authenticating documents involved with returning remains to their home country. Informing the office of the reason for apostille authentication of documents will facilitate prompt attention to your request. Please contact the Business Services Division by email (INBiz@sos.in.gov) or phone: (317) 234-9768 for assistance with any urgent circumstances.

What Is an Apostille?

An apostille is a certificate issued by the Indiana Secretary of State that verifies the authenticity of a public document (such as a death certificate) for use in another country. International shipments often require that official documents be authenticated. The Secretary of State's office authenticates official documents by attaching an apostille certificate.

Which Documents Need an Apostille?

For funeral homes and coroners, the most common documents requiring an apostille are **Indiana birth and death certificates**. Other documents may include:

- Medical examiner or coroner reports
- Burial transit permits
- Letters of non-contagion
- Notarized affidavits or statements related to the deceased

The sum of documentation required to effectuate the transit of human remains to a foreign country will depend on the specific country's requirements. International carriers and freight forwarding companies are generally familiar with required shipping and customs documents.

Step-by-Step Apostille Process

1. Gather Documents

- Obtain **original** or **certified copies** of the death certificate or other vital records from the Indiana State Department of Health or the appropriate county office.
- Documents that are not original or certified by the issuing authority need to be authenticated by a **Notary Public**. Notarized documents might include reports, affidavits, or statements. Vital records (birth, death, marriage certificates) do not need notarization but must bear the seal and signature of the issuing official.

2. Complete the Request Form

- Download and fill out the [Request for Apostille or Certification of Notarial Act](https://www.in.gov/sos/business/apostilleauthentication/) form from the Indiana Secretary of State's website:
<https://www.in.gov/sos/business/apostilleauthentication/>
- The request form may be substituted for a cover letter which contains the required information.

3. Check that Documents are Ready

- Each document must be an **original** or **certified** copy from the issuing authority (photocopies or scanned versions cannot be authenticated).
- Documents must bear the **official seal and signature** of the issuing authority.
- Documents which are not vital records or otherwise issued and signed by a public official must be **properly notarized**.
- The request form must be **fully completed**.

4. Payment of Fees

- The fee for each apostille certification is **\$2.00**.
- **No fee is charged** for apostilles on:
 - Death certificates issued by Indiana
 - Birth certificates issued by Indiana
 - Adoption documents
 - Student transcripts or diplomas issued by Indiana institutions
 - Documents prepared by the Secretary of State
- Make checks payable to: **Secretary of State**

5. Submit Your Documents

- Please identify in your request form or letter any special circumstances, urgency, or timelines to ensure office can prioritize appropriately.
- Send your completed request form by mail or courier service with documents to be authenticated, and a **self-addressed, prepaid return envelope** to:

Indiana Secretary of State
Business Services Division
302 W. Washington St., Room E-018
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Recommendations for Fastest Service

- **Use a tracking-enabled next-day mail or courier service** (such as USPS Priority Mail Express, FedEx, or UPS) to send your documents to the Secretary of State. This ensures your documents arrive quickly and you can track delivery.
 - Include a **tracking-enabled return envelope** so the completed apostille can be sent back to you promptly.
 - For urgent requests, consider using a **courier service** or visiting our office in person. Requests with fewer than 5 documents will be processed as you wait in our lobby. Please make an appointment with the office if you need more than 5 documents authenticated. Schedule an appointment at: [SOS - Business Services Appointment Scheduler](#)
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Turnaround Time

- The Indiana Secretary of State typically processes apostille requests within **1–2 business days** of receipt. Same day service is typical but not guaranteed. Apostille requests are not processed on weekends or state holidays.
 - If your request is time-sensitive, please notify the Business Services Division by email at INBiz@sos.in.gov so that we can prioritize accordingly.
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Additional Tips

- **Do not notarize vital records** (death certificates, birth certificates, etc.). These must be certified by the issuing authority.

- If your document is in a language other than English, you may need to provide a **notarized translation**. Consult with your shipping company or the receiving country's consulate or embassy for translation requirements.
- Always confirm with the recipient country if apostilled documents are required and that the document meets their specific requirements.
- The Secretary of State Business Services Division does not provide notary services. Some banks and financial institutions provide free notary services to account holders and members. Many pack and ship stores offer notary services for a nominal charge.

Contact Information

- **Indiana Secretary of State, Business Services Division**
Phone: (317) 234-9768 Email: INBiz@sos.in.gov
Website: <https://www.in.gov/sos/business/apostilleauthentication/>

This process ensures your documents are properly authenticated for international use, helping families and funeral homes meet legal requirements for the transit of a deceased's remains abroad. If you're unsure about documents or requirements, we encourage you to contact our office with any questions before mailing documents or visiting the office. Staff will be happy to assist with document review in advance of submission.