

“TSA Regulations for Flying with Cremation Urns”

If you or your client find themselves in a situation that requires the transportation of cremated remains on-board an airplane, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a few simple guidelines that will help to make your client’s travels as smooth as possible during this difficult time. Below we have included some of these regulations; however, since specific regulations can vary with different airlines, it is important for your client to first contact the airline before traveling to ensure that he has adhered to all their requirements. For example, American Airlines strongly encourages its customers to carry on the cremation urn instead of checking it.

Firstly, when traveling with cremated remains, be sure to notify airport personnel upon arrival. Your client can then choose to bring the cremation urn as either carry-on luggage or as checked baggage:

Carry-on Luggage: When bringing a cremation urn as carry-on luggage, it is required that the urn be able to pass through airport security’s x-ray machine. If the cremation urn generates an opaque image, it will not be admitted for on-board travel. Certain materials such as thick metals, crystals, and some types of glass cause a black area to show up on the security x-ray monitor. If this were to happen with other carry-on items, the security personnel would simply hand search the luggage, but, out of respect for the deceased, airlines have a strict policy against opening cremation urns. Even if express permission for the urn to be opened is given, airport security is not allowed to do so. In this case, your client would need to place the temporary urn with checked baggage. Therefore, if one wishes to take the urn as a carry-on item, it is suggested that he purchase a temporary urn made of materials that will not produce an opaque image such as those made out of wood, plastic, cardboard, or non-lead lined ceramic.

Checked Baggage: If your client is unable to pass the urn through airport security as carry-on luggage, most airlines allow the urn to be brought onboard the aircraft as checked baggage instead. Firstly, the cremation urn must be well sealed before giving it to airport personnel. Then, it will undergo testing for explosive materials and devices. Just as with carry-on luggage, airport security’s strict policy of not opening cremation urns still applies with checked baggage.

If you are in need of TSA-approved temporary urns, you can purchase them wholesale from McDonald Containers on our website: <http://mcdonaldcontainers.com/plastictemporaryurns.php>.

For more information on TSA guidelines for flying with cremation urns, please visit TSA’s website: http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1296.shtm.

If you or your client do not wish to or are unable to transport cremation remains via a commercial airline, there are other transportation options such as shipping through the United States Postal Service. Guidelines for shipping cremated remains can be found in our other article: “The Shipment of Cremated Remains.”