

Purchasing a Death Certificate



New Requirements

Beginning on January 1, 2021, a new vital records law goes into effect that changes the ordering requirements for death certificates. For increased security of personal information, only individuals with specific relationships to the person whose death record is being requested can receive a death certificate. Identity and proof documentation will be required. The new law created a new product, the short form death certificate that does not display cause and manner of death information or the decedent's social security number. If you require that information, you must purchase the long form death certificate.

To purchase a death certificate, you must:

- 1** Be a qualified applicant and prove your relationship by submitting proof documentation.
- 2** Provide identity documentation.
- 3** Provide required information.
- 4** Pay the fee. Fees start at \$25.



Center for Health Statistics

Certification Services
Washington State Department of Health
ContactCHS@doh.wa.gov
360-236-4300



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To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

1 Eligibility

To purchase a death certificate, you must be a qualified applicant. Qualified applicants for a death certificate are: spouse or domestic partner, parent, stepparent, legal guardian, child, stepchild, sibling, grandparent, great grandparent, legal representative, authorized representative, next of kin, funeral home (up to 12 months from date of death), government agency or the courts (only for official duties), or title insurance agents and persons using the certificate for personal or property rights (short form death certificate only). If you are not one of the people listed above, you will not receive a death certificate.

To prove you're a qualified applicant, you must submit documentation proving your relationship. The acceptable documentation to prove qualifying relationship includes:

- Copies of vital records such as birth or marriage certificates from this or another state that links you to the requested death record
- Copies of certified court orders linking you to the requested death record (e.g. legal representative)
- Authorized Representative form
- Document of letter from a government agency or court stating that the death certificate will be used for official purposes (for government agency or court only)

In some cases, your identity documentation will sufficiently link you to the death record and serve as your proof documentation.

Visit our website at www.doh.wa.gov for the Proof of Eligibility (PDF) for examples of how to prove qualifying relationship.

2 Identification

The acceptable identity documentation includes:

- One government issued identification document that has not expired more than 60 days (must contain photo, full name, and date of birth)
- If you do not have a government issued identification document, then at least two documents from the alternative list.

Visit our website at www.doh.wa.gov for the full list of acceptable identity documentation, including the alternative list.

3 Information

The required pieces of information to order a death certificate are:

- First and last name of the decedent
- Approximate date of death (Month and Year)
- City or County where the death occurred

4 Fees

The death certificate fee is \$25. Additional service fees may be added depending on order method. Order methods include online through www.VitalChek.com, by phone 1-866-687-1464, mail, or in-person when in-person services resume.

Important Note: No refunds will be given if a record could not be located or the documentation you provided did not prove you were eligible to receive a death certificate.

Visit our website at
www.doh.wa.gov for more
information.