



May 23, 2011

Dear Colleague:

We have heard from several of you regarding requests from local Social Security Administration (SSA) offices to send 721 forms on death records verified through OVERS. There has been concern and confusion about the role and processes of online verification and electronic reporting of deaths between the State Vital Records office and the SSA. Oregon initiated a discussion with SSA representatives to determine what was happening and what, if anything, we can do to help. We want to share new information and clarify new guidelines regarding notification of deaths to the SSA.

Files are sent by the State Vital Records office daily and processed by SSA each night. The majority of records process automatically and present no problem. However, some records are rejected from the system and must be resolved individually, sometimes with a substantial delay from the family's perspective. SSA is working to improve the processes to serve families more effectively.

It appears that two situations that occur infrequently make a 721 useful to the family.

First, if the information submitted does not result in a '*Passed*' response from the online verification system (verify SSN link), please send a 721 form to the local SSA office as a courtesy to the family. SSA has not yet developed the process to quickly identify and process non-matching records and this can cause delay for families. Please continue to process the death record as you have and do not hold the record for days waiting for alternative information (social security number, legal name, date of birth and gender) to verify the social security number.

Second, the SSA has separate databases for social security number verifications and for payments. This means a record that passed verification still may not match the information in the payments system used by local SSA offices to stop benefits to the deceased and start benefits for surviving family members. If a local SSA requests a 721, please provide the form as a courtesy to the family.

Center for Health Statistics  
Letter regarding SSA 721 form  
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If local SSA offices *routinely* request 721 forms, please let us know. It is our understanding that online verification and electronic reporting from the State Vital Records office is the preferred contact and, as the processes improve, the frequency of the work around of using the 721 in addition will decline.

Attached is a letter from SSA requesting your assistance to benefit the families you already serve. If you have any questions on this matter, please contact Karen Hampton, OVERS manager at 971-673-1191.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer A. Woodward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

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