

Matters of Record



Death certificate news September 2017

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Reminder: Reduced fee for additional copies of death records ending



Effective January 1, 2018, additional copies of death certificates will no longer be discounted. All death certificates will be \$25.00 per copy. This is the second round of a two-step fee implementation process. The first round occurred on January 1, 2016, when the fee for the first copy was increased from \$20 to \$25.

Updated order forms will be available mid-December at our website: www.healthoregon.org/chs.

Information on the new fees can be found at www.healthoregon.org/feechanges.

If you have any questions please contact Jennifer Woodward at 971-673-1185 or jennifer.a.woodward@state.or.us.

Who is legally responsible for filing a death certificate?

According to law, whoever first assumes custody of a decedent is responsible for completing and submitting a death report. Custody is “the care, possession, and control of a thing or person.” This means a funeral service practitioner or the person acting as such who removes the decedent from the place of death or takes possession of the body is responsible for completing the report of death. In cases where there is no funeral service practitioner, or person acting as a funeral service practitioner, the medical examiner shall submit the report of death. We often refer to the report of death as the death record.

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The death report must be submitted to the county registrar or to the Center for Health Statistics within five calendar days after the date of death.

Please review the Oregon law listed below:

[ORS 432.133 Mandatory submission and registration of reports of death](#); persons required to report states, “The funeral service practitioner or person acting as a funeral service practitioner who first assumes custody of the dead body shall submit the report of death to the county registrar of the county in which the death occurred or to the Center for Health Statistics. In cases where there is no funeral service practitioner or person acting as a funeral service practitioner, the medical examiner shall submit the report of death.”

If you have additional questions regarding submitting the report of death, please contact JoAnn Jackson at 971-673-1160 or joann.jackson@state.or.us.

Who is the informant?

The informant supplies the decedent’s personal information to complete a death record. Usually the informant is the next of kin, but could be a nurse, police officer, medical examiner, etc. Correctly identifying the informant is vital to the integrity of a death record.

Death records require the informant’s full name, relationship to the decedent, and mailing address. The informant must be accessible if the information on a death record is disputed and in some cases is needed to authorize amendments. For example, the informant must approve of certain amendments to the marital status or the spouse’s name. Not having a clear informant makes amending the record or identifying where the information came from difficult.

In cases where there are no family, friends, or associates to collect the information from, the person who contacted you to inform you of the death would be the informant.

The following are common informant errors:

- Labeling the funeral director as the informant
- The informant’s name is “None”, “Unknown”, or a job title such as “Nurse”
- The informant’s mailing address is incomplete, undeliverable, or “Unknown”

Consider the following example: Officer Smith conducts a welfare check on John Doe. She discovers the deceased, and immediately contacts the medical examiner and Jane, the next of kin. Jane’s husband, Jeff, calls the funeral director to transport the remains and provides the decedent’s personal information for the death record. Who is the informant? While there are many people and roles in this example, Jeff is the informant because he was the source of the decedent’s personal information to complete the death certificate.

If you have any questions, please contact Derrick Patterson at 971-673-1163 or derrick.c.patterson@state.or.us.



Missing street designators in addresses

Resident Address

Address

Street Number	Pre Directional	Street Name, Rural Route, etc.	Street Designator	Post Directional	Apt #, Suite #, etc.
123	SE ▼	Ash	Court ▼	▼	
City or Town	County	State	Country	Zip Code	
Portland	Multnomah	Oregon	United States	97232	
Inside City Limits					
Yes ▼					

Validate Page Next Clear Save Return

A recurring issue with death record registration in the OVERS system is forgetting to include the street designators. A street designator is the type of street in an address such as Road, Lane, Avenue, or Circle. Although street designators may be commonly omitted in everyday speech, these are legal records and the full address is required. Without it, the address is ambiguous and incomplete. For example, “123 SE Ash” could refer to Ash Court, Ash Place, or Ash Street.

Missing street designators cause delays in registration as well as an increase in returned mail. If you don't know the street designator, you can check the address at USPS zip code lookup: https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction_input

If you have any questions about adding missing street designators, contact Derrick Patterson at 971-673-1163 or derrick.c.patterson@state.or.us.



Helping to minimize dropped to paper records

Checking OVERS before dropping a record to paper

We all know that electronic death records are more quickly registered and available to families than hybrid (dropped to paper) records. In the month of July, the statewide average to register electronic records was 11 days shorter than to register hybrid records (7.6 days for electronic records compared to 19.1 days for hybrid records). Because we are all working towards the same goal in getting the families the death records as quickly and as efficiently as possible, we urge you to take a second to check for the certifying doctor in OVERS before you drop the record to paper. Below you'll find a quick guide that will show you how to check if a doctor is in OVERS.

Step 1: Select the [Request Medical Certification](#) link. The link is in the [Death Registration Menu](#) in the left hand column, under the [Other Links](#) section.

Step 2: Select a Certifier Name.

- a. Click on the spyglass icon () next to the certifier name.
- b. When the search field appears, type the provider's last name in the [Last Name](#) field and press Enter. You may also use the percent sign (%) as a wildcard if you're unsure of the spelling. For example, searching for anders% will find you providers named Anders, Anderson, and Andersen.
- c. From the search results, click the [select](#) link next to the provider's name.

If you locate the doctor in OVERS and are unsure of the facility they are associated with, just use the percent sign (%) in the Facility field and it will pull up the facility that the doctor is associated with. If you locate a doctor, but are unsure if the doctor is currently using OVERS, please feel free to contact the OVERS helpdesk at: 971-673-0279.

Continuing the journey to transition medical certifiers to OVERS

We have had a couple hospitals reach out to us about getting their doctors set up to sign death records in OVERS. This is wonderful news for both Vital Records and funeral homes. We will continue working with hospitals who show interest in switching their doctors to OVERS, and will take further action to follow up with the remaining facilities who have yet to sign up. We will also be sending out reports to hospitals of their performance and compliance with the law regarding the electronic signing of death records. These reports will be sent to each individual facility administrator. We hope that these reports will give them an idea of where they are at in complying with the law [ORS 432.133 - Mandatory submission and registration of reports of death](#).

If you have any further questions regarding our process for enrolling medical certifiers into OVERS, please contact the OVERS help desk at 971-673-0279.

Occupation and Industry resources

The OVERS help desk often receives multiple questions regarding how to report the occupation and industry of a decedent on a death certificate. By providing accurate data on decedent occupation and industry, funeral directors are helping the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) improve statistics on occupational mortality, as well as workers' health. A good reference document that may be useful is the [Guidelines for Reporting Occupation and Industry on Death Certificates](#).



These guidelines are designed to assist funeral directors and those involved in the registration process to contribute more accurate data. They provide instructions and examples of adequate occupations and industries. By utilizing this resource, funeral homes will minimize the amount of follow-up queries they receive related to occupation and industry. If you have additional questions, please contact Derrick Patterson at 971-673-1163 or derrick.c.patterson@state.or.us.

Who is eligible for free veteran certificates?

Up to two free “for veteran claim use only” death certificates are available for veterans, family of veterans, and other family members eligible to receive veteran benefits even when the deceased is not a veteran.

These certificates are used to establish, transfer, and terminate veteran benefits. In some cases the decedent is not a veteran, but rather a family member that is receiving veteran benefits. The certificate is still needed for veteran use.

When a death certificate is needed to handle a family's affairs, it is helpful for them to be informed about the Veteran Service Officer (VSO). The VSO may have additional benefit information for families, beyond burial benefits. Let's serve our veterans and eligible family members the best that we can by ensuring that they are informed of all known veteran services benefits.



The nearest Veteran's Service Officer may be found at the link below:

<http://www.oregon.gov/odva/VSODIRECT/pages/locator.aspx>

Funeral Home Order Forms for Death Certificates can be found at the following link:

[Funeral Home Order Form for Death Certificates](#)

If you have additional questions regarding death certificates for veterans, please contact Karen Rangan at 971-673-1182 or karen.l.rangan@state.or.us.

Please meet our newest manager: Ryan Sanders

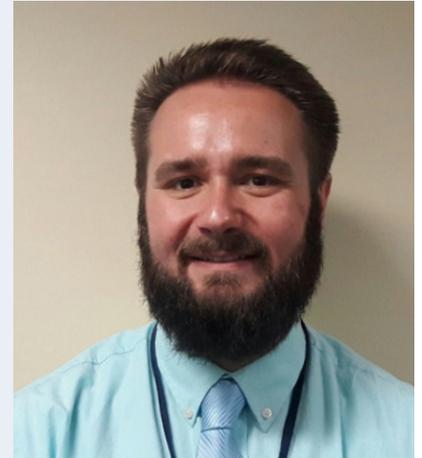
As many of you learned in our last newsletter, this spring marked the retirement of long time managers, Cynthia Roeser and Carol Sanders. In order to fill Carol's role as the Amendments Manager, we've recently hired Ryan Sanders. We'd like to welcome Ryan into the Center for Health Statistics family!

Ryan comes to our department with previous management experience under the Oregon Department of Human Services. From 2013, Ryan was a Branch Operations Manager for Oregon's Self Sufficiency program. In his spare time he enjoys being a dad and serving his church as a dedicated youth leader.

If you have questions in regards to birth, death, marriage, divorce or domestic partnership amendments, you can reach Ryan at 971-673-1178 or by email at ryan.g.sanders@state.or.us.

With the recent personnel changes, you may be asking yourself if your contact list is up to date. Please see the contact list for CHS Managers at the end of this newsletter for up-to-date contact information, or visit the Center for Health Statistics [staff directory](#) on the new Oregon Health Authority website for a more complete listing of CHS staff.

We'll keep you posted as positions become filled.



Wanted – newsletter topics

Have a question or idea for a future newsletter article? Contact Judy Shioishi, at 971-673-1166 or judy.shioishi@state.or.us. Judy collects ideas for articles and then shares them with the writing team.

Thank you to the contributors of this newsletter:

Kelly Stacey, Jill Janisse, Ryan Sanders, Rosie Gerstle, Juana Anguiano Rivera, Cody Wang, Jamie Gould, Laura Munoz, Karen Rangan, Mason Mohamed, Krista Markwardt, Kelli Wasson, Carolyn Hogg, JoAnn Jackson, Steven Baird, Jennifer Woodward, Jen Southworth, Krystalyn Salyer, Derrick Patterson.

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800 N.E. Oregon Street, Suite 225
Portland, OR 97232-2187

Mailing address: P.O. Box 14050
Portland, OR 97293-0050

General information: 971-673-1190

Order vital records: 1-888-896-4988

Website:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates>

OVERS website:

<http://healthoregon.org/overs>

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
Center for Public Health Practice/Center for Health Statistics

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Contact the Center for Health Statistics at 971-673-1173 or 711 for TTY.