

Important information for Funeral Directors

How to Avoid the Creation of Duplicate Records

It has been a year since the Electric Death Registration System (EDRS) was expanded so all medical examiners, investigators and their staff could enter scene investigation data directly into EDRS. That upgrade eliminated the need for medical examiners, investigators and staff to access two systems and provides interoperability between the EDRS and the state medical examiner case management system. This means in cases where the death is investigated by a medical examiner or investigator, the electronic record will be started by that medical examiner office.

This is a shift from our previous process (prior to this upgrade funeral directors typically started the record).

This change made collaboration and discussion a priority for funeral establishments and medical examiner offices. When a record is started in EDRS, the user must always utilize the “Duplicate Check” feature. This feature helps eliminate the creation of duplicate records, avoids rework, and eliminates the time spent investigating duplicate records. The number of duplicate records have declined, but more can be done

- Assign the record to the funeral home as quickly as possible. Funeral establishments cannot view the record until it has been assigned to them.
- Always use the duplicate check and ensure names are spelled correctly.
- Follow the process on “Who Starts the Record”
- For additional guidance on this issue, please view the Vital Update dated November 2019 on the Death Registration Portal page under [Announcements/Newsletters](#).

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2020 Statistics

Listed below are the statistics for the registration of Iowa death records. The chart below shows the number of days it takes to register a record.

Month	Deaths Reg. / Month	Average Days Between DOD and Date Filed						
		Certifier		ME		Combined		
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Jan.	3,052	3,070	8	8	18	20	10	11
Feb.	2,359	2,508	8	7	17	20	9	10
March	2,648	2,778	8	8	17	22	9	10
April	2,603	2,728	8	7	18	18	9	9
May	2,474	2,605	8	8	19	17	9	10
June	2,335	2,674	8	9	19	17	10	10
July	2,631	2,679	8	8	20	19	10	10
Aug.	2,358	2,774	7	8	19	21	10	10
Sept.	2,399	2,794	8	8	26	20	11	11
Oct.	2,689	-	8	-	18	-	9	-
Nov.	2,417	-	8	-	22	-	11	-
Dec.	2,718	-	8	-	17	-	10	-



Registration is Open!

Take an opportunity to get a first hand look of the newly upgraded Iowa Vital Events System (IVES). The 90 minute webinars are scheduled for October 28th and October 29th. Two sessions will be offered on each date.

Click [HERE](#) to register. If you need more detailed information on the launch and training, this [link](#) will provide you the extra details you're looking for.



COVID-19 Alert No. 5

New Video Guidance for Certification of COVID-19 Deaths and Updated COVID-19 Coding Rules May 5, 2020

New Video Guidance for Certification of COVID-19 Deaths

To supplement the published guidance on filling out death certificates for deaths related to COVID-19, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has released a short video on the NCHS YouTube channel. The video runs a little over three minutes and can be accessed directly at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL3VMwieAms>.

Watch the short YouTube video for guidance.



Who Starts the Record At-A-Glance Guidelines

A funeral director starts a death record when:

The manner of death is NATURAL,

AND

The death occurs outside of a hospital, nursing home or under hospice care.

A medical examiner is **REQUIRED** to start a death record when:

The manner of death is NON-NATURAL,

OR

The death occurs outside of a hospital or nursing home setting regardless of manner of death.

Funeral directors please note:

- For deaths where the manner is NON-NATURAL or the death occurs outside of a hospital or nursing home setting, search for the decedent record in IVES first.
- If you are unable to locate the decedent record, either contact the Bureau of Health Statistics or call the medical examiner/medical examiner investigator in the county where the death occurred and ask to be assigned to the death record.
- DO NOT IMMEDIATELY START A DEATH RECORD FOR ME CASES.

COVID-19

Reporting and Certifying COVID-19 Deaths

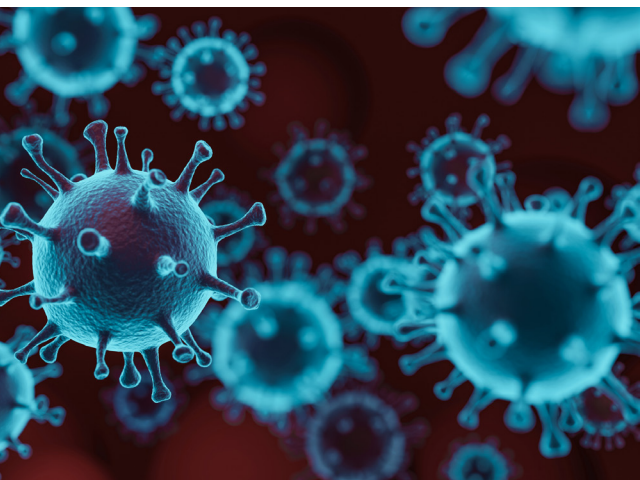
How can Funeral Directors assist?

- If you have information that COVID-19 contributed to the death and it is not listed on the record, please contact the Bureau of Health Statistics, our staff will follow up with the medical certifier to ensure the record reflects the appropriate information.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 should be reported on the death certificate for all decedents where the disease caused or is assumed to have caused or contributed to death. We ask that all deaths use the standard terminology COVID-19.

Resources and guidance is ongoing, we will continue to provide updates via announcements and newsletters. Use the CDC guidelines to format the cause of death for all COVID-19 related deaths.





COVID-19 Resources

Iowa Department of Public Health:

COVID-19 webpage

Governor's Proclamations: <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/proclamations>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/funeral-fqs.html>

Newsletters and Announcements:

VR MDeath Registration Portal Page:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/health-statistics/vital-records/drportal>

There are many COVID-19 resources available to refer to, if you have questions.



Fetal Death Reporting – Action Required

The Iowa Bureau of Health of Health Statistics has been notified that compared to previous years, the 2020 preliminary report shows Iowa is underreporting the number of fetal deaths.

The Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics has released preliminary statistics on Fetal Death reporting in Iowa. Per [Iowa Code 144.1\(7\)](#):

“Fetal death” means death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of human conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy. Death is indicated by the fact that after expulsion or extraction the fetus does not breathe or show any other evidence of life such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles. In determining a fetal death, heartbeats shall be distinguished from transient cardiac contractions, and respirations shall be distinguished from fleeting respiratory efforts or gasps.

Possible reasons for underreporting:

1. The death was reported as a death but not as a Fetal Death (The death was entered in the Electronic Death Registration System);
2. The fetal death was reported as an induced/Spontaneous Termination;
3. The fetal death record was completed but was not submitted to Vital Records; or
4. The fetal death record was never completed.

Your assistance is needed to identify these missing records. Please verify that all fetal deaths have been reported correctly. Reporting accurate information to the National Center for Health Statistics is one of our top priorities. This information is a valuable resource which is used by many of our local and federal partners.

If you have fetal deaths that were overlooked, please complete the [Certificate of Fetal Death form](#). The form is available on the [Vital Records Portal Page](#). The original form, on registration paper, must be submitted to:

Iowa Department of Public Health - Bureau of Health Statistics
321 E. 12th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the death registration team. Thanks for your assistance with this very important matter.

Contact Information

Name	Phone	Email
Sandra Lyles Field Representative	515-725-2963	Sandra.Lyles@idph.iowa.gov
Michele Houston Death Registration Specialist	515-281-5153	Michele.Houston@idph.iowa.gov
IVES Help Desk	866-309-0831	IVESHelpDesk@idph.iowa.gov