

QUESTION?



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RESOURCES

COUNTY RECORDER OFFICES

County Specific Records

Local county recorder offices are located in each of the 99 counties.

The county offices maintain death records that occurred in their county. Records held in the jurisdiction of the county are the only records that are open for public inspection. Records held and maintained at the state Vital Records Office are closed to the public.

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday - County offices are closed for all county holidays. Contact the county directly

County Directory:

Access the County Recorder directory to find contact and location information, and for current office hours <https://www.iowacounties.org/member-resources/county-directory/>



STATE VITAL RECORDS OFFICE



Iowa Department of Public Health Bureau of Health Statistics and Vital Records

Lucas State Office Building, 1st Floor
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday from 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Excluding State Holidays

Please call (515) 281-4944, or use the "Contact Us" page to submit questions online.
Website: <https://idph.iowa.gov/health-statistics/vital-records>



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DEATH CERTIFICATE PROCESS



BUREAU OF HEALTH STATISTICS

Serving Iowa Families Since 1880

The Bureau of Health Statistics, Vital Records offers our condolences for your loss. This brochure contains the most common services families request from the State Vital Records Office or a local county recorder's office. The best thing you can do to speed up this process is to provide complete and accurate information, and thoroughly read all documents before signing.

ANSWERS!



WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

A complete and accurate death record is a record that is eligible to be registered by the registrar. The state registrar is located in the Bureau of Health Statistics, State Vital Records Office and there is a county registrar located in each of the 99 counties. The death record must be completed with proper cause of death information pursuant to all federal and state laws and regulations. It must be signed by the funeral director and medical certifier, and be "filed" with the state registrar. Your funeral director is your best resource to keep you informed regarding the progress through this process.

PERMITS

CREMATION PERMITS, DISINTERMENT PERMITS & OUT OF STATE/COUNTRY BURIALS

A cremation permit is required before the deceased can be cremated. Cremation permits are coordinated by the funeral home and the cause of death must be certified by a medical certifier. The cremation permit is signed and issued by a medical examiner. Once the permit is processed it is provided to the funeral home that is handling the service.

What is an Informant?

The informant is the person who provides the information to the funeral home that will listed on the death certificate. Family members, informants, funeral homes and medical certifiers can make changes to the death certificate.

Relocation of Remains:

A disinterment permit is required to relocate remains. In most cases, the funeral home will manage the process of obtaining the permit. If you need a permit, contact the funeral home that handled the service or the state Vital Records Office.

Out of State or Country Burial:

Additional documentation may be necessary if the deceased is being transported out of the state of Iowa. These arrangements will need to be coordinated with your funeral director and county medical examiner. Always allow additional time to process these requests.

DEATH CERTIFICATE

Death certificates can only be obtained after the record has been registered.

Ordering Within One Year of Registration:

Certified death certificates can be ordered through your funeral home, the State Vital Records Office or any of the 99 County Recorder's Offices.

Please note: certificates ordered by the funeral home will be mailed to the funeral home for distribution to the family.

Ordering After One Year of Registration:

Certified death certificates can only be ordered through the state Vital Records Office or any of the 99 County Recorder's Offices.

When Can I Expect The Certificate(s)?

Any qualified applicant can obtain the certified certificate(s). Requests can be made in person or by mail. Once we receive the fully completed application and the record is registered:

- ✓ **Mail Requests:** Allow 4 to 6 weeks for processing your mailed request for certified certificate(s).
- ✓ **In-Person Requests:** Same day - 2-hour turnaround if you arrive by 2:00 PM

SECURITY

CONFIDENTIALITY



The Bureau of Health Statistics is responsible to ensure the security and confidentiality of vital statistics are maintained.



CORRECTIONS

AVOID THEM

CORRECTIONS

Corrections are necessary for many reasons. However, they are most often caused by incorrect or incomplete information provided to the funeral home, or by data entry errors.

How to Avoid Errors on The Death Certificate:

Complete and closely review the Informant's Worksheet obtained from the funeral home. All requested information is important. If you don't have the information you need with you, it can normally be found on the deceased's driver's license, birth certificate, marriage license, social security card, bank statement, medical records or other records.

Before the death certificate is filed, request the Decedent's Worksheet from your funeral home to review for accuracy. Avoid signing any documentation until you have read it thoroughly and are comfortable that the information is correct.

How Can Corrections be Made in the Future?

Your funeral home can manage or guide you through the process.

When Can I Expect Corrected Certificate(s)?

Once the state Vital Records Office receives the correct documentation, please allow four weeks for processing. Corrections are processed in the order received.

Important: Incomplete submissions are returned for correction.