Death Records Training
For Funeral Homes
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Presented by Social Entrepreneurs, Inc.
6548 S. McCarran Blvd., Suite B
Reno, NV 89509
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Welcome and Introduction
Welcome to the Vital Records System (VRS) training program. This training module focuses on creating death records and it is designed for funeral homes. If you are new to VRS, this training module will show you how to create and update an accurate death record. If you have experience in VRS, this module will serve as a refresher and may give you some helpful hints moving forward.

Intended Outcome
It’s very important to enter death information accurately and completely. Not only is it required by statute, but it can be difficult and costly for families to change records at a later date.

This module is designed to give you some tips and tricks to navigating VRS and also addresses many frequently asked questions. By the end of the training you should be comfortable with completing a death record accurately and completely. Remember, it’s important to fill out records to the best of your ability, and it’s the law.

What is Required and When?
When you first meet with the family of someone who has died, you start collecting information that will be important for the death record. With all death records it is helpful to start entering information as soon as it is obtained because there are some processes that cannot begin until certain information is recorded.

Also, Nevada statute requires the death certificate to be completed in 72 hours, or a total of three days, unless an autopsy is required.

Information that will be required to start a death record is:

- First Name and Last Name of Decedent (if there are any questions about this, it’s best to default to a photo identification or social security card).
- Date of Death
- City, State and County of Death

Details of how to enter this and other information into VRS can be found later in this document, but here are the Nevada Revised Statutes that apply directly or indirectly to funeral homes.

NRS 440.450
The funeral director or person acting as undertaker shall obtain the personal and statistical particulars required from the person best qualified to supply them...
As a funeral home, we are often the primary contact for the family. What does NRS say about getting the facts from the family or informant?

NRS 440.360 **Authentication of personal and statistical information concerning certificate.** The personal and statistical particulars of the death or stillbirth certificate shall be authenticated by the name of the informant, who may be any competent person acquainted with the facts.

Who is authorized to sign off on a record concerning disposition of a body?

NRS 440.370 **Signature required on statement of facts concerning disposition of body.** The statement of facts relating to the disposition of the body must be signed by the *funeral director* or person acting as undertaker or by an authorized representative of the crematory if the body is cremated.

Who should sign a death certificate and what information is required?

NRS 440.380 **Medical certificate of death: Signature; contents.**

1. The medical certificate of death must be signed by the physician, if any, last in attendance on the deceased, or pursuant to regulations adopted by the Board, it may be signed by the attending physician’s associate physician, the chief medical officer of the hospital or institution in which the death occurred, or the pathologist who performed an autopsy upon the deceased. The person who signs the medical certificate of death shall specify:
   (a) The social security number of the deceased.
   (b) The hour and day on which the death occurred.
   (c) The cause of death, so as to show the cause of disease or sequence of causes resulting in death, giving first the primary cause of death or the name of the disease causing death, and the contributory or secondary cause, if any, and the duration of each.

2. In deaths in hospitals or institutions, or of nonresidents, the physician shall furnish the information required under this section, and may state where, in the physician’s opinion, the disease was contracted.

What do I need to know about stillbirths as a funeral director?

440.070 **“Stillbirth” defined.** As used in this chapter, “stillbirth” means a birth after at least 20 weeks of gestation, in which the child shows no evidence of life after complete birth.

NRS 440.350 **Form and contents of certificate of death or stillbirth.** The certificate of death or of stillbirth that shall be used is the standard form approved by the United States Public Health Service.

NRS 440.390 **Certificate of stillbirth.** The certificate of stillbirth must be presented by the *funeral director* or person acting as undertaker to the physician in attendance at the stillbirth, for the certificate of the fact of stillbirth and the medical data pertaining to stillbirth as the physician can furnish them in his or her professional capacity.
What does NRS say about my duties as a funeral director?

NRS 440.420 Duties of funeral director, health officer, coroner and coroner’s deputy when death occurs without medical attendance.

1. In case of any death occurring without medical attendance, the funeral director shall notify the local health officer, coroner or coroner’s deputy of such death and refer the case to the local health officer, coroner or coroner’s deputy for immediate investigation and certification.

2. Where there is no qualified physician in attendance, and in such cases only, the local health officer is authorized to make the certificate and return from the statements of relatives or other persons having adequate knowledge of the facts.

3. If the death was caused by unlawful or suspicious means, the local health officer shall then refer the case to the coroner for investigation and certification.

4. In counties which have adopted an ordinance authorizing a coroner’s examination in cases of sudden infant death syndrome, the funeral director shall notify the local health officer whenever the cause or suspected cause of death is sudden infant death syndrome. The local health officer shall then refer the case to the coroner for investigation and certification.

5. The coroner or the coroner’s deputy may certify the cause of death in any case which is referred to the coroner by the local health officer or pursuant to a local ordinance.

What are my duties as a funeral director as they relate to a person of an unknown identity?

NRS 440.440 Duties of funeral director and sheriff upon death of unknown person.

1. In any case of a death occurring to anyone whose identity is unknown, before burying the body the funeral director shall annex to the certificate of death a certificate from the sheriff that the sheriff has on file in his or her office the fingerprints of the body.

2. Sheriffs of the respective counties shall maintain in their respective offices a file known as the unidentified deceased persons file. Sheriffs shall, without further compensation, see that such fingerprints are obtained as provided in this section and placed in the file as a public record.

What does NRS say I need legally to bury or cremate a body?

NRS 440.450 Prerequisites to disposal of body. The funeral director or person acting as undertaker is responsible for obtaining and filing the certificate of death with the local health officer, or his or her deputy, in the registration district in which the death occurred, and for securing a burial or removal permit prior to any disposition of the body.

What does NRS say about how to collect personal information and where to put it?
NRS 440.460  Personal and statistical information.  The funeral director or person acting as undertaker shall obtain the personal and statistical particulars required from the person best qualified to supply them, over the signature and address of his or her informant.

What does NRS say about my duties as a funeral director as they relate to the physician or coroner?

NRS 440.470  Presentation of certificate.  The funeral director or person acting as undertaker shall present the certificate to the attending physician, if any, or to the health officer or coroner, for the medical certificate of the cause of death and other particulars necessary to complete the record.

What do I need to know about burial permits?

NRS 440.520  Disposition of burial or removal permit.  The funeral director shall:

1. Deliver the burial permit to the sexton or person in charge of the place of burial, before interring or otherwise disposing of the body.

2. Attach the removal permit to the box containing the body, when shipped by any transportation company.

NRS 440.530  Burial permit to accompany body.  The permit shall accompany the body to its destination, where, if within the State of Nevada, it shall be delivered to the sexton or to any other person in charge of the place of burial.

NRS 440.540  Necessity for permit to inter more than 72 hours after death; removal of body to another registration district.

1. Except as provided in subsection 2, the body of any person whose death occurs in this state shall not be interred, deposited in a vault or tomb, cremated or otherwise disposed of, removed from or into any registration district, or be held temporarily pending a further disposition more than 72 hours after death, until a permit for burial or removal or other disposition thereof has been properly issued by the local health officer of the registration district in which the death occurred.

2. If the person who is to certify the cause of death consents, a body may be moved from the place of death into another registration district to be prepared for final disposition.

NRS 440.560  Interment without burial permit prohibited.  No sexton or other person in charge of any premises in which interments are made shall inter or permit the interment or other disposition of any body unless it is accompanied by a burial, removal or transit permit as provided in this chapter.

How long do I have to finish the death certificate if no autopsy is required?

NRS 440.490  Presentation of completed certificate of death to local registrar.  The funeral director or person acting as undertaker shall present the completed certificate of death to the local registrar within 72 hours after the occurrence or discovery of the death. If a case is referred to the coroner, he or she shall present a completed certificate to the local registrar upon disposition of the investigation.
What is written about disinterment?

NAC 440.190 Disinterment. (NRS 440.120)

1. Within a reasonable time after any disinterment or removal of human remains, the funeral director or person who performed the disinterment shall send a copy of the permit for the disinterment to the State Registrar.

2. Upon receipt of the copy, the State Registrar shall:
   (a) Change the statement of the place of interment on the certificate of death to show the new place of interment if the remains have been interred in a new place; and
   (b) Send a copy of the changed certificate to the local registrar in the county of the new place of interment.
Creating a Record

To create a death record, start by opening the Netsmart VRS home webpage and going to File on the top left corner of the screen, and then New Event, then Death.
Tabs

You will then come to this screen with two rows of green tabs. If you expand this window, you should see one row of green tabs, as shown below. (Some browsers or screen resolutions may still show two rows even when the window is maximized).

On each tab is a field or box where information is usually required. In this manual, each field or text box is highlighted with grey, like this <field>, so that you can easily see when the manual is directly referencing a specific field.

It is very important that you use the (TAB) key on your keyboard to move from field to field, and not by using your mouse to drop your cursor from field to field. There are data validation messages or “edit boxes” that will appear only when this key is used. Using the mouse to drop your cursor from field to field can sometimes bypass the data validation messages and could cause you to miss a field.
How to Save and Fix Your Work
If you are new to VRS, it’s important to know that there are a number of fields that require information before you can save the record. The required fields for each tab are documented later in this manual.

But for now, look at the top right screen of VRS and you should see a save button:

You can attempt to save the record right now, but it’s best to wait until you have gone through all the tabs and filled out as much information as possible. If you continue to press the TAB button on your keyboard, you will notice that VRS gives you a validation message or “edit box.”

You can do a few things from here:
Clicking the “Re-Key” button will take you right to the field that needs to be completed.

Clicking the “Override” button will bypass that field so that you can continue trying to save the record, and it will turn it an aqua color. Choose this option only if you do not intend to enter any information in that field because it is not applicable.

Clicking the “Query Field” allows you to save the record without entering the information, but it assumes you want to fill it out later. It will turn the field into a yellow color. Click “Query Field” if you intend to enter the information later, but just don’t have it at the moment.

Clicking the “Skip” button will skip the field for now and will let you come back to it later. It will turn the field into a green color. You will be prompted to enter this information again before the record can be saved.
Searching for a Record

Once you have saved your record it’s best to update it by going to your work queue as seen below.

However, if you ever need to search for a record, you will need to search for it if you would like to modify it or make any corrections.

To search for a death record that has already been created, go to Search on the main menu bar and select Death as seen below:

You should then see the Search Criteria below:
It’s best to search by a person’s last name, social security number, or date of death, and it’s best to search just a few fields at a time. If you search for too many fields, you may get no results. Also, do not search by facility name as the database keeps that field separate in the security role information. When you have found the record you are looking for, double click to open it.
Decedent Tab

Required Fields on the Decedent Tab are:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Date of Death (cannot be skipped, overridden, or queried)
- County of Death
- City, Town, or Location of Death
- Place of Death
- Hospital, or other institution

*Some fields will not prompt you to Re-Key, Override, Query or Skip when you tab over them but will still prompt you to fill them in upon saving.

If you are sure you are the first to create this record, start by dropping your cursor in the field called <First Name Box> which is located in the Decedent box paragraph. All fields prior to this can be skipped. After you have entered that name, press the tab button on your keyboard to move to the next field. If you try to skip the <Last Name> field, you will notice that you are asked to re-key, override, query, or skip.

Once at the <Date of Death> field, (the red box below) you will notice that it must be filled in to proceed further.

Remember to use the TAB button when moving from field to field.
Special Characters in Names

When you have tabbed to the <1. First Name> field it’s important to keep in mind that most special symbols are not allowed. Symbols such as accent marks, tildes, diarese and circumflexes (seen below) are not compatible with the system. If the first, middle, or last name contains any of the following marks, they should be left off the record.

The only two symbols allowed are okinas and apostrophes (seen below). Okinas are sometimes used in Polynesian and Hawaiian names. The following symbols are allowed in first, middle and last names.

For the purpose of death records, hyphens are always allowed in first, middle, and last names.
Dec History

Required fields on the Dec History Tab are:

- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Years of Education
- Marital Status
- SSN

*Some fields will not prompt you to Re-Key, Override, Query or Skip when you tab over them but will still prompt you to fill them in upon saving.

For the purpose of using VRS, it’s important that you fill out BOTH the Race and Ethnicity section.
Most people of Latino or Hispanic ethnicity in the United States consider their race to be White. A smaller number who identify with the Hispanic or Latino ethnicity consider their race to be Black or African American. An even smaller number identify with the Hispanic or Latino ethnicity but consider their race to be Asian.

Below is the most common way (statistically) that you would categorize someone who identified with the Latino or Hispanic ethnicity.
**Dec History 2**

Required Fields on the Dec History 2 Tabs are:

- County
- City Town or Location
- Street Address
- In City Limits? (Y,N,U)
- Father’s Last Name
- Informant Last Name
- Mailing Address
- Informant City
- Zip Code
- Informant Information Verified

*Some fields will not prompt you to Re-Key, Override, Query or Skip when you tab over them but will still prompt you to fill them in upon saving.*

The `<Informant Information Verified?>` tab should be filled in with a “Y” once the informant has viewed all of the information on the funeral home worksheets and signed off on it.
Disposition Tab
Required Fields on the Disposition Tab:

- Method of Disposition
- Cemetery, Crematory or Other Location
- Funeral Home Name (This will be the funeral home listed on the certificate. If another funeral home is involved in creating the record, indicate “Y” in the <Trade Call> Box at the bottom of the screen)
- Funeral Home Director Name
- Is there a Trade Call?

The last box on this page, <Is there a Trade Call?> should be filled in with a “Y” if there is another Funeral Home involved in this case. If so, the next tab can be used to identify them.
Trade Call Tab

No fields are required on this tab unless you checked <Is there a Trade Call> on the above tab. Once a funeral home is selected, other fields will auto populate, but it’s a good idea to verify the information.
Certifier

Required on this tab is:

- Pronounced Dead
- Military Time Pronounced

As a funeral home, you are responsible for entering <21a. / 22a. Certifier Type>, <23a.Name> and <Full Name> in the Attending Physician paragraph.

It is very important that <23a. Name> be filled out with the correct physician. This ensures that the record will be routed to all of the correct work queues. If the incorrect physician is listed the record will be delayed.

If the physician is not on the list, please contact the Office of Vital Records to have them added.

<21. Certifier> will be completed by the physician and <22. Coroner> will be filled out by the coroner, unless the record has been dropped to paper, in which case those fields will be completed at later date.
Cause of Death

The fields required on this tab are

- Death due to communicable disease?
- Immediate Cause of Death
- Due to or as a Consequence of
- Autopsy?
- Was coroner contacted?

Either the Coroner or Physician will provide you with this information, or he or she will enter it directly into VRS.
Cause of Death (cont)

The required fields on this tab are:

- All fields (if an injury is involved)

If Manner of Death is not of natural causes, no fields are required after <28a Manner of Death>.

![Image of the Cause of Death tab](image-url)
Reject
This tab is typically filled out by County Registrar or State Registrar. However, if the entire death record is electronic (no paper), then the funeral home may use this tab to reject the record back to the physician or coroner if necessary.

Registrar
This tab is to be filled out by the Office of County Registrar or State Registrar.

Signatures
Use the fields indicated below to sign off on the record:
Flags
This tab is mostly used by the Office of Vital Records, but the funeral home can use it to track whether the social security number and name information was verified.

Closing
Thank you for completing the death records training module.

The creation of a death record is an important event, and we hope this manual clarifies some of the roles and responsibilities of the funeral home.

Thank you for your ongoing effort to complete death records accurately and completely as required by Nevada Revised Statutes and Nevada Administrative Code.

An electronic presentation of this training is also available through the Office of Vital Records.
Appendix A -- Evaluation

Please rate the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Evaluation Results</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand the importance of vital records and that it's the law that I create them accurately and completely to the best of my ability.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I understand that incorrect vital records can lead to hardships for living family members in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I understand who is required to complete vital records.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. As part of a funeral home staff, I understand all the fields that I am required to fill in within the VRS system for a death record.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I understand how to search for a record.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I understand how to update a record after it has been created by me or someone else.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I understand that a death record must be completed within 3 days of the death if no autopsy is required.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>