



Improving the Quality of Cause of Death Data
on Mortality Records

“Pending Investigation Records” for Funeral Homes
2017

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The State of Nevada, Office of Vital Records (OVR), per the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) contract, is currently working to improve the quality of cause of death information reported to NCHS. In order to improve reporting, OVR is striving to accomplish the following two (2) goals:

Goal #1: Obtain at least 80% of mortality records with cause or manner of death as, “unknown” or “pending” being submitted to NCHS within ten (10) days of the date of death.

Goal #2: No more than 5% of the mortality records with a drug poisoning death, containing only the code of T50.9 (other or unspecified drugs) within 150 days after submission to NCHS.

The information obtained from death certificates is essential for mortality statistics. Though improving cause of death information is the overall intent, nearly all the information on a certificate is pulled for statistical data analysis. Ensuring the data entered on a death record is completed as thoroughly and accurately as possible, will provide cleaner and more precise data that is useful for mortality statistics, research and monitoring. This includes information entered by both the funeral home and the certifier. A large factor in the usefulness of the data provided by the certificates is the timeliness of the data received.

To better achieve the two goals, OVR will be requiring death records that are pending investigation to be submitted to NCHS within ten (10) days of the date of death. OVR will allow the cause of death data to be more easily updated by the certifier after the investigation is complete. Also, providing more specific information on drug poisoning deaths allows for more useful and applicable data to be reported back to the NCHS and for the State of Nevada.

The changes established to accomplish the indicated goals will affect all persons that are responsible for the completion of a certificate such as the funeral home, certifier and registrar.

GOAL #1: EXPECTATIONS FOR FUNERAL HOMES

STARTING THE RECORD

In order to meet goal #1, it is crucial that ALL death records are started immediately upon receipt of the decedent. This means personal informational fields of the death record will need to be completed and signed by the Funeral Director within five (5) days of the date of death.

If you anticipate that the decedent may be transferred to another funeral home, the Office of Vital Records asks that you still start the death record. This will allow our office to monitor all records. If the decedent is transferred, the County or State Registrar office can easily transfer the death record to another funeral home. Once transferred to another funeral home, they will have the responsibility for completing the death record.

Creating and submitting a death record to NCHS takes the cooperation of several people. The funeral home starts the record and enters the personal information, the certifier enters the cause of death, and the registrar completes the registration. Do not forget OVR still needs to submit the death record to NCHS. Submitting the death record within five (5) days will give the certifier and registrar time to process their part of the death record. This ensures it can be submitted before the NCHS deadline.

In order to avoid having the record rejected, all information should be completed in its entirety. If something is unknown and will not be known before the record is registered, indicate that the field is unknown. If it is a numerical field, input 9's. If it is not a numerical field, type "Unknown". Completing all areas confirms that the information is unknown as opposed to intentionally being left blank. **The record will be rejected for missing information.**

SERVICES TRANSFERRED

In the event that the decedent or services are transferred to another funeral home, the funeral home originating the death record should immediately contact the proper registrar office. This can be done by calling the registrar office of the county where the decedent passed away.

Clark County (702) 729-1011

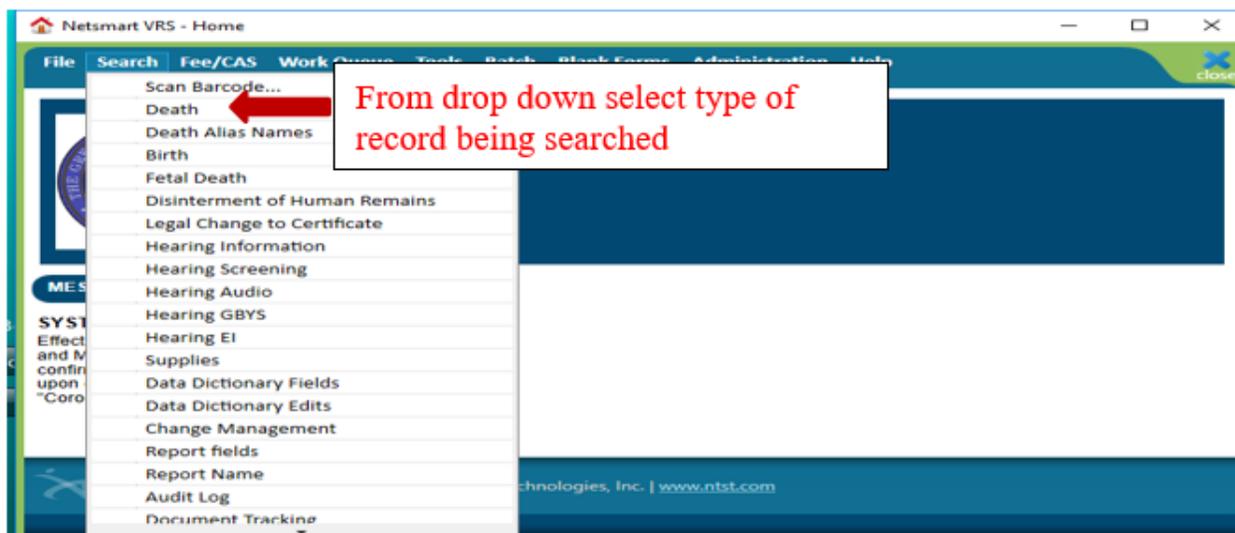
Washoe County (775) 328-2455

All other Counties (775) 684-4166

Once the information has been received, the registrar can reassign the death record to ensure that the proper funeral home has access to complete the personal information. If you have received a decedent from another funeral home and are unsure if a death record has been created, please contact the proper registrar office.

PREVENTING DUPLICATES

Before starting ANY death record, do a manual search to confirm that a record does not already exist in the system:



1. Enter the “Year of Death”. The year must be the same as the year you will be using as the date of death.
2. In the “First Name” search field, enter the first two (2) letters of the decedent’s first name followed by the percent symbol (%).
3. In the “Last Name” search field, enter the first two (2) letters of the decedent’s last name followed by the percent symbol (%).
4. Click “search” to generate a list of records.

The screenshot shows a web application window titled "Search - Death". The interface includes a menu bar with options like "File", "Search", "Fee/CAS", "Requests", "Work Queue", "Tools", "Batch", "Administration", and "Help". Below the menu is a "Search Criteria" section with two tabs: "Search Criteria" and "Results". The "Search Criteria" tab is selected, showing various input fields for search parameters. The "Year of Death" field is set to "2017". The "First Name" field contains "Bo%" and the "Last Name" field contains "MA%". Red arrows point to these fields. At the bottom of the form are "Reset/Clear" and "Search" buttons. The "Search Event" button is located at the very bottom of the window.

This will generate a list of all the records created within that year with the matching first two letters of the first and last name of the decedent.

If no record is found, check your “Personal in Progress” work queue.

Our office will actively monitor duplicate records. In the event that a duplicate has been created, please contact our office by emailing ovrhelp@health.nv.gov. You will need to provide the name of the decedent and the date of death.

Each duplicate record will be researched and deactivated as outlined below. The following are the general guidelines our office adheres to when researching and deactivating a duplicate record:

<u>First Record</u>	<u>Second Record</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Unregistered	Unregistered	Second record is deactivated regardless of the status of the second record.
Unregistered	Registered	First record is deactivated.
Registered	Unregistered	Second record is deactivated.
Registered	Registered	Second record is deactivated unless the second record is the only record with certificates issued.

COMPLETION OF DEATH RECORDS

Funeral directors, coroners and registrars all have required roles – pursuant to the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 440 and the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 440 - in the process of completing a death record.

- 1. Pursuant to NRS, the funeral director is responsible for presenting the certificate of death to the physician, coroner or medical examiner AND presenting a completed certificate to the registrar. Therefore, funeral directors need to monitor the status of all their records until they are completed. This can easily be done by looking in the “Decedent” tab of the death record as shown later in this manual.**

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.

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.

2. Pursuant to NRS, the State/County Registrar will review the record and determine if it is complete or not. If complete, a burial permit will be issued and the record will be registered. If not complete, the record will be rejected.

NRS 440.210 Certificates of birth and death: Examination by local health officer. Each local health officer shall carefully examine each certificate of birth or death when presented for record to see that it has been made out in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and the instructions of the Board.

NRS 440.220 Certificates of birth and death: Enforcement of requirements by local health officer.

1. **If any certificate of death is incomplete or unsatisfactory, the local health officer shall call attention to the defects in the return and withhold issuing the burial or removal permit until the defects are corrected.**

NAC 440 indicates that the State Registrar or Local Registrar of vital statistics may issue a burial or removal permit without a completed certificate of death, or a certificate eligible to be registered, for:

1. A case of a coroner or medical examiner which is pending investigation; or
2. Any case requiring significant difficulty or expense to the applicant.

3. Monitoring Records

The monitoring of a pending investigation death record is the responsibility of the County or State Registrar. The OVR recommends that funeral homes monitor the status of all their death record, that are pending investigation. By doing this, the funeral home will know when the completed death record will be ready for the family to order death certificates. This can easily be done by looking in the Decedent's Tab of the record.



Pending/Pending/Pending – The death record is created by the funeral home or reassigned by the Registrar office, but not completed and signed by the Funeral Director. The Certifier has not completed and signed the death record. It is the responsibility of the funeral home to be sure the record is signed by the Certifier. Work Queue: “FH Personal in Progress”

Pending/Signed/Pending – The funeral home has completed the personal information and has signed the record. The record is waiting for the Certifier’s completion and signature. Work Queue: “FH waiting on MC”

If applicable, a burial permit waiting for the Coroner or Medical Examiner to approve and/or complete the medical information. Work Queue: “FH Burial Permit Pending”

Filed/Signed/Pending Investigation – The death record has been signed by both the Funeral Director and the Coroner. Now, it will be in the appropriate registrar’s work queue to be reviewed and registered or rejected. If completed properly, a burial permit can be issued. The funeral home may find the record through a manual search.

Registered/Signed/Pending Investigation – “Pending” certificates may be issued at this time. The burial permit number has been issued. Once the investigation is complete, the coroner will go back into the death record to enter the cause of death information and re-sign the record. Work Queue: “FH Burial Permit Ready”

****Note: The Funeral Director’s responsibility is now complete. However, we recommend continuing your monitoring to know when the family is able to order completed death certificates. The State/County Registrar office will continue to monitor these records through completion.****

Filed/Signed/Signed – The completed death record will once again be in the appropriate registrar’s work queue to review and register or reject. The funeral home may find the record through a manual search.

Registered/Signed/Signed – The death record is now complete. Certificates with the cause of death information may now be issued. The funeral home may find the record through a manual search.

File Search Fee/CAS Requests Actions Work Queue Linking Tools Administration Help

save close

Cause of Death Cause of Death(cont) Reject Signatures Registrar Flags Supermcar

Decedent Dec History Dec History2 Disposition Trade Call Court Ordered Certifier

System

State File Number Out of State File Number Case File Number Reg Type Paper or Electronic Filing?
2010002346 3524180 P

Drop to Paper Printed Drop to Paper Print Date
//

Overall Record Status Record Status for Personal Info Record Status for Medical Info
Registered Signed Signed

GOAL #1: HOW WILL IT AFFECT FUNERAL HOMES?

PENDING INVESTIGATION RECORDS AND BURIAL PERMITS

NAC 440 indicates that the State Registrar or Local Registrar of vital statistics may issue a burial or removal permit without a completed certificate of death, or a certificate eligible to be registered, for:

1. A case of a Coroner or Medical Examiner which is pending investigation; or
2. Any case requiring significant difficulty or expense to the applicant.

On pending investigation records, the Coroner or Medical Examiner will be completing the record as shown on pages 12 - 14. Once the Coroner or Medical Examiner has completed the pending investigation death record, it will initially be filed with the County or State Registrar. If properly completed, the Registrar will register the death record and issue a burial permit pursuant to the NAC 440. As usual, once the record is registered, no changes on personal information may occur without an Affidavit for Corrections of a Record form or court order.

File Search Requests Actions Work Queue Linking Tools Help

save close

Cause of Death(cont) Reject Signatures Registrar Flags Supermicar

Decedent Dec History Dec History2 Disposition Certifier Cause of Death

Pending Investigation Death due to communicable disease?

Y N

Cause of Death (Part 1) Enter the chain of events that directly caused death.

a. Immediate Cause (Final disease or condition resulting in Death) Approx. Interval - Onset to Death

Pending

VIEWS 2

List Conditions leading to the cause on line A.

b. Due to or as a Consequence of Approx. Interval - Onset to Death

c. Due to or as a Consequence of Approx. Interval - Onset to Death

d. Due to or as a Consequence of Approx. Interval - Onset to Death

Cause of Death (Part 2)

Other significant conditions contributing to death.

Autopsy? Were Autopsy Findings Used? Did Tobacco Use Contribute to Death?

U U

If Female

8. NOT APPLICABLE

Was Coroner Contacted? Coroner Contacted Reason

Y Work the Case

Accepted in these fields:
Y = Yes
N = No
U = Unknown

File Search Requests Actions Work Queue Linking Tools Help save close

Decedent Dec History Dec History2 Disposition Certifier Cause of Death

Cause of Death(cont) ← Reject Signatures Registrar Flags Supermicar

Cause of Death (cont)

28a. Manner of Death Edit Counter
 Pending Investigation ←

Injury

28b. Date of Injury Is this DATE approximate? Military Time of Injury Is this TIME approximate? 28c. Time of Injury

28d. Describe how Injury occurred

Injury at work? 28f. Place of Injury

Transportation Injury? Specify

State Injury County

City Zipcode

28g. Location Street Address

File Search Fee/CAS Requests Actions Work Queue Linking Tools Administration Help

save close

Decedent Dec History Dec History2 Disposition Trade Call Court Ordered Certifier

Cause of Death Cause of Death(cont) Reject Signatures Registrar Flags Supermiliar

Burial Permit

County Coroner Name: Coroner, Sherrie
 Coroner Signature: X
 Date Coroner Signed: 02/17/2017
 Completed By: Coroner, Sherrie

County of Death Registrar Name: Connell, Sherrie

Registrar Signature: Y
 Registrar Approval Date: 02/17/2017
 Completed by: Connell, Sherrie

Burial Permit Number: 00000000237324
 Permit Print Date: / /

Facility

Facility Complete? (Y,N,R): X
 Complete Date: 02/17/2017
 Completed by: Connell, Sherrie

Funeral Home

Personal Info Complete (Y/N/R)? Y
 Complete Date: 02/17/2017
 Completed by: Funeral, Sherrie

Director Signed? Y
 Date Signed: 02/17/2017
 Funeral Director Name: Funeral, Sherrie

Physician Signing Certificate

Medical Info Complete (Y/N/R)?
 Complete Date: / /
 Completed by:

Physician Signed? N
 Date Signed: / /

Coroner Signing Certificate

Medical Info Complete (Y/N/R)? Y
 Complete Date: 02/17/2017
 Completed by: Coroner, Sherrie

Coroner Signed? Y
 Date Signed: 02/17/2017

When the investigation is complete, the Coroner or Medical Examiner will be able to enter the record and update all the medical information and resubmit to the County or State Registrar.

PENDING CERTIFICATES

With pending investigation death records being registered, death certificates with a “pending” cause of death will be able to be issued to family members.

To order death certificates with a “pending” cause of death, complete the enclosed form. This form can only be submitted by the funeral home. A separate request on the regular application form will be required to order death certificates after the Coroner / Medical Examiner has completed their investigation and updated the death record.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for death records. The interface includes a menu bar with options like File, Search, Fee/CAS, Requests, Actions, Work Queue, Linking, Tools, Administration, and Help. Below the menu bar are several tabs: Cause of Death, Cause of Death(cont), Reject, Signatures, Registrar, Flags, and Supermical. Underneath these tabs are more options: Decedent, History, Dec History2, Disposition, Trade Call, Court Ordered, and Certifier. The main content area is titled 'System' and contains several input fields and dropdown menus. The 'State File Number' field is highlighted in yellow and contains the value '2010002346'. The 'Case File Number' field contains '3524180'. The 'Reg Type' field is empty, and the 'Paper or Electronic Filing?' field contains 'P'. There are also checkboxes for 'Drop to Paper Printed' and 'Drop to Paper Print Date'. At the bottom, there are three dropdown menus: 'Overall Record Status' (set to 'Registered'), 'Record Status for Personal Info' (set to 'Signed'), and 'Record Status for Medical Info' (set to 'Pending Investigation'). Red arrows point to the 'Decedent', 'Registered', 'Signed', and 'Pending Investigation' elements.

SUSTAINABILITY

County and State Registrars will be monitoring death records from creation to completion. The OVR will contact funeral homes to follow up on records that do not appear ready for completion within five (5) days from the date of death. The OVR will report timeliness of creation dates, assigning of the certifier and the signing of the record through quarterly compliance reports to be sent to all funeral homes and the Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Services Board. All of us need to do our part to make this process go as smoothly as possible.

To ensure that new staff coming in are trained, or as a reference source, training materials such as videos and manuals are available online at the following link:

http://dpbh.nv.gov/Programs/BirthDeath/dta/Training/Birth/Death_Vital_Records_-_Training_Education/

GOAL #2: HOW WILL IT AFFECT FUNERAL HOMES?

REJECTED RECORDS

Death records involving drug poisoning / intoxication must be certified (signed) by a Coroner or Medical Examiner. The cause(s) of death must indicate the specific drug(s) that caused the drug poisoning / intoxication. If “other or unspecified drugs” is indicated, the record will be rejected to the certifier for further specification of drugs thus delaying the registration of the record and issuance of death certificates.

GOAL #2: EXPECTATIONS FOR FUNERAL HOMES

There are no expectations for funeral homes for Goal #2.