Guide to Obtaining Certified Death Certificates

United States

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NOTE – The following information was obtained from the various state health departments and only applies to certified copies of the death certificate. Many states allow non-certified certificates to be obtained by the general public as a matter of public record, some at a reduced cost, but these do not include information such as cause of death. Information is current as of November, 2006.

Alabama

Who may obtain: Parent, spouse, child, grandchild, sibling, legal estate representative, informant on certificate.

Cost: $12.00 ($4.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: By mail to Alabama Vital Records, in person at county health department; internet* (additional fee).

Alaska

Who may obtain: Spouse, parent, child, sibling. (Picture ID must accompany request). If none of the above submit a letter or document from the office or agency requesting.

Cost: $20.00 each.

How to obtain: Mail or fax.

Arizona

Who may obtain: Spouse, adult immediate family member (proof of relationship such as marriage license or birth certificate required), attorney representing estate (submit letter stating professional relationship on letterhead including bar number), attorneys representing family members (submit letter stating professional relationship on letterhead including bar number, documentation of retention, documentation of client relationship such as marriage certificate or birth certificate), attorneys representing persons with a legal interest (submit letter stating professional relationship on letterhead including bar number, documentation of retention, documentation of legal interest such as will, insurance policy, court order of guardianship, co-title to personal or real property, other document establishing legal interest in the record). (“Legal interest” is met
provided all the following criteria are met: relationship between the deceased and requestor, substantiated legal interest in the record, government ID submitted).

Third parties may obtain certificates with the following criteria: 1) submit a signed and notarized authorization to release the copy from the surviving spouse or family member, 2) submit government issued ID, 3) submit proof of relationship.

Cost: $10.00 each.

How to obtain: In person at Office of Vital Records in Phoenix or appropriate county office where death occurred, by mail to Office of Vital Records in Phoenix.

Arkansas

Who may obtain: Spouse, immediate family or their authorized representative, academic research groups, persons who can demonstrate a right to the record.

Cost: $10.00 ($8.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: By mail, telephone, in person.

California

Who may obtain: Parent or legal guardian, court ordered entitled party, member of a law enforcement agency conducting an official investigation, child, grandparent, sibling, spouse or domestic partner, attorney representing the estate or any of the above (POA must accompany application), any agent of a funeral establishment who orders on behalf of any of the above.

Cost: $12.00 each.

How to obtain: Mail.

Colorado

Who may obtain: Parent, grandparent, stepparent, sibling, spouse, ex-spouse with proof of tangible interest, adult child and stepchild, grandchild, other relative (in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, cousin if needed to administer the estate or other tangible interest), legal representative of any of the above, legal
representative of the deceased, decedent’s physician, funeral director, employer (if needed to process benefits), insurance company processing decedent’s claim, probate researchers, creditors, informant on certificate, others who can demonstrate a tangible interest to protect or determine a personal or property right. (NOTE – in all cases proof of relationship is required).

**Cost:** $17.00 ($10.00 per additional copy).

**How to obtain:** In person at state office in Denver, online, mail.

**Connecticut**

**Who may obtain:** Anyone over the age of 18. (Social Security Number, occupation, race, Hispanic origin, educational level will not be on the certificate unless you are an immediate family member, estate executor, informant on the certificate, funeral director, or certifying physician).

**Cost:** $5.00 each.

**How to obtain:** In person at vital records office in town or city of decedent’s residence at the time of death, or state office, and by mail.

**Florida**

**Who may obtain:** Anyone over the age of 18. (Cause of death will not be included unless you are an authorized individual). For cause of death: spouse, parent, adult child, grandchild or sibling, any person who provides a will, insurance policy or other document demonstrating their interest in the estate, or any person who provides documentation that he or she is acting on behalf of any of the above (photo ID required for all of the above), or by court order.

**Cost:** $5.00 ($4.00 per additional copy).

**How to obtain:** In person, fax, mail, telephone.

**Georgia**

**Who may obtain:** General public.

**Cost:** $10.00 ($5.00 per additional copy).
How to obtain: Online, mail, in person at the county vital records office where the death occurred.

Hawaii

Who may obtain: Spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, legal guardian, estate representative, person with court order, adoptive parents of a child of the decedent, a person who requires the certificate for the determination of payments under a credit insurance policy.

Cost: $10.00 ($4.00 per each additional copy).

How to obtain: In person at vital records office in Honolulu, or by mail.

Idaho

Who may obtain: Spouse, sibling, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, legal representative of the above, other persons who can show it is needed for their property right. (One photo ID or two other forms of ID required).

Cost: $13.00 each. ($5.00 additional charge for rush order).

How to obtain: Mail, fax.

Illinois

Who may obtain: Relative of the decedent, persons with personal or property right interest with the decedent. (Documentation required).

Cost: $17.00 ($2.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: Mail, fax, in person at Vital Records office in Springfield, or the county clerk office in the county where the death occurred.

Indiana

Who may obtain: Documented interest, defined as immediate kinship (parent, grandparent, adult sibling), or documented personal financial or legal interest in the record. (One photo or two other forms of ID required).
Cost: $10.00 ($4.00 per additional copy). (Fees may vary by county).

How to obtain: Mail or in person at Indiana Department of Health in Indianapolis, or the county health department where the death occurred.

Iowa

Who may obtain: Entitled persons include spouse, children, legal parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, legal representative or guardian of the decedent. (Legal representatives, guardians and siblings must present additional proof of entitlement).

Cost: $15.00 each. ($5.50 additional charge for credit cards).

How to obtain: Phone, mail, in person (Health Statistics office in Des Moines),

Kansas

Who may obtain: Person named on the record, immediate family, or person who can provide legal proof the record is necessary for determination of personal or property rights. (One photo or two other forms of ID required).

Cost: $13.00 ($8.00 per additional copy). ($9.00 expedited service fee for telephone, fax and internet requests).

How to obtain: Mail (5-10 business days), additional cost priority mail (3 business days), telephone (3 business days), fax (3 business days), online (3 business days), in person at the Curtis State Office Bldg., Topeka (15-20 minutes).

Kentucky

Who may obtain: No restrictions.

Cost: $6.00 each. (Additional credit card fee for internet and telephone requests).

How to obtain: Internet, telephone, mail (30 business days), in person at the Office of Vital Statistics, Frankfort.
Louisiana

**Who may obtain:** Spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, legal guardian with judgment of custody. (One photo or two other forms of ID required).

**Cost:** $7.00 each.

**How to obtain:** In person at the Parish Health Unit, mail to Vital Records Registry, Metairie.

Maine

**Who may obtain:** Relative, attorney, physician, funeral director, other persons authorized in writing by the decedent’s immediate family or descendents.

**Cost:** $15.00 ($6.00 per additional copy).

**How to obtain:** Mail (7-10 business days).

Maryland

**Who may obtain:** Relative of the deceased, authorized representative of the surviving relative, funeral director in charge of final disposition, an individual with a proven legal need, court of law. (One photo or two other forms of ID required).

**Cost:** $12.00 each. ($7.00 additional fee for telephone, internet or fax requests, plus $13.50 if express mail is requested).

**How to obtain:** Mail or in person at Division of Vital Records, Baltimore. Within 30 days of death certificates may be obtained in person at the local health department in which the funeral director filed the certificate, with the exception of Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Massachusetts

**Who may obtain:** No restrictions.
**Michigan**

**Who may obtain:** No restrictions.

**Cost:** $26.00 ($36.00 expedited) ($12.00 per additional copy).

**How to obtain:** Mail.

**Minnesota**

**Who may obtain:** Persons having a tangible interest including: spouse, child, sibling, grandchild, parent, grandparent, legal custodian, conservator, guardian (with documentation), estate representative, licensed attorney (with license number), representative of the organization that filed the certificate, trustee of a trust, government agency, pursuant to a court order, or if you can demonstrate the certificate is necessary for the determination or protection, of a personal or property right (Must be approved by the State Registrar). A person representing any of the above may request with a notarized statement in addition to the application. (NOTE – If the record has not yet been released to the public you may be refused even if you have a tangible interest).

**Cost:** $13.00 ($6.00 per additional copy). Request will be expedited (place your request ahead of others) for an additional $20.00 fee. FedEx Mail Service is available for $16.00 per order.

**How to obtain:** Certified copies are not available in person. Mail or fax (4-6 weeks).

**Mississippi**

**Who may obtain:** Persons with a tangible interest.
**Cost:** $10.00 ($2.00 per additional copy).

**How to obtain:** Mail, internet, telephone, in person at the Vital Records office, Jackson.

### Missouri

**Who may obtain:** No restrictions. (Relationship must be provided on application and reason for request).

**Cost:** $13.00 ($10.00 per additional copy).

**How to obtain:** In person at the local health department office, mail to state office, Jefferson City, telephone. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

### Montana

**Who may obtain:** Parent, spouse, child (must provide proof of relationship/legal need), legal guardian (provide proof), authorized representative (provide proof) or those who provide documentation showing it is needed for determination or protection of the individual’s personal or property rights. (General public may request copies without cause of death).

**Cost:** $12.00 ($5.00 per additional copy). Additional charges for expedited shipping.

**How to obtain:** Mail, fax.

### Nebraska

**Who may obtain:** Spouse, parent, child. Legal representative of the decedent including: attorney, legal guardian, conservator, custodian, executor or executrix, or other person showing lawful authority to act on behalf of the decedent. Requestor must document the purpose of the request.

NOTE – Nebraska Title 174 § 004 allows others with the following “proper purposes” to obtain certificates: consensual use (written consent of the registrant), scientific or medical use (organization, university or institution, government agency) who is conducting scientific, medical, or
public health research, as long as there is no publication or disclosure of the name or facts leading to the identity of the decedent, law enforcement, genealogical use (deceased less than 50 years) with written consent of the decedent’s family.

Cost: $11.00 each.

How to obtain: Mail.

Nevada

Who may obtain: Relationship and/or the need to fulfill a legal process will be evaluated upon receipt of request.

Cost: $10.00 each, $11.00 each in Clark, Douglas, Mineral and Washoe counties.

How to obtain: Mail.

New Hampshire

Who may obtain: No restrictions. (Photo ID required). (Relationship to be included on application).

Cost: $12.00 ($8.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: Mail.

New Jersey

Who may obtain: (Per Executive Order #18) Parent, legal guardian or legal representative, spouse, child, grandchild, sibling, state or federal agency, pursuant to a court order, or under “other emergent circumstances as determined by the Commissioner.”

Cost: $25.00 ($2.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: Mail (allow 6-8 weeks).
New Mexico

Who may obtain: Immediate family or individuals that demonstrate a tangible interest.

Cost: $5.00 each.

How to obtain: Mail.

New York City

(NOTE – For deaths occurring within the five boroughs of New York City only).

Who may obtain: Immediate family (Photo ID required). You may apply on behalf of an authorized requestor with a notarized statement.

Cost: $15.00 each.

How to obtain: Mail or in person, Office of Vital Records, NYC. (2-4 weeks).

New York State

Who may obtain: Spouse, parent, child, other persons who have a documented legal right, documented medical need, New York State court order. (One photo or two other forms of ID required).

Cost: $30.00 each (additional $15.00 each for priority handling), $45.00 for fax, telephone or internet requests (additional $11.95 vendor fee).

How to obtain: Mail (3-4 weeks, 1 week for priority handling), internet, fax, telephone (1 week).

North Carolina

Who may obtain: Immediate family, others who provide a “brief statement” as to why the certificate is needed.

Cost: $15.00 ($5.00 per additional copy). ($15.00 additional walk-in fee for expedited same day service).
How to obtain: Mail, in person at state building, Raleigh.

North Dakota

Who may obtain: Certified copies including cause of death are only available to a relative, personal representative, attorney of a relative or representative, or by court order.

Cost: $5.00 ($2.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: Mail, internet, fax, in person at the state building, Bismarck.

Ohio

Who may obtain: Any applicant (Title XXXVII § 3705.23)

Cost: $16.50 each.

How to obtain: In person at the local county health department office or the state building, Columbus, mail.

Oklahoma

Who may obtain: Any applicant. (Identification and purpose required).

Cost: $10.00 each.

How to obtain: In person at state building, Oklahoma City, mail.

Oregon

Who may obtain: Family members and their legal representatives, persons or organizations with a personal or property right, government agencies. Others may obtain with a notarized permission note from an eligible person.

Cost: $20.00 ($15.00 per additional copy). ($12.50 per copy quick service fee for fax, telephone, internet orders).
How to obtain: In person at the vital records office, Portland, internet, fax, telephone, mail.

**Pennsylvania**

Who may obtain: Immediate family, extended family who indicate a direct relationship to the decedent, legal representative of the estate.

Cost: $9.00 each. (No cost to active/inactive members of the Armed Forces and their dependents).

How to obtain: Mail, fax, internet, in person at a county office.

**Puerto Rico**

Who may obtain: Not specified (relationship and purpose required for application).

Cost: $5.00 ($4.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: Mail.

**Rhode Island**

Who may obtain: Immediate family, guardian or agent of these individuals, attorneys, title examiners, persons requiring information for the protection or determination of a personal property right, by court order. (Photo ID required).

Cost: $15.00 ($10.00 per additional copy).

How to obtain: Mail, in person at the state building or city or town where the death occurred. (“Please note that in most cases, you will receive your records more quickly from the City and Town locations than from the State Office.”)
South Carolina

Who may obtain: Family or their legal representative, persons who can demonstrate a direct and tangible interest to determine a personal or property right.

Cost: $12.00 ($3.00 per additional copy, $5.00 each for expedited 3-5 day service).

How to obtain: Mail, in person a state vital records office, Columbia, or the county health department where the death occurred.

South Dakota

Who may obtain: Spouse, child, parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling, attorney, physician, funeral director, designated agent of one of the above, persons with a personal or property right. (Government issued photo ID or two other forms required).

Cost: $10.00 each. (Additional $11.50 for expedited phone and internet requests).

How to obtain: In person at any county Register of Deeds or at the state building, Pierre, mail to state or any Register of Deeds, phone or internet.

Tennessee

Who may obtain: Family members or legal representatives. (Government issued photo ID required).

Cost: $7.00 each.

How to obtain: Internet, mail.

Texas

Who may obtain: Spouse, parent, funeral director listed on certificate.

Cost: $20.00 ($3.00 per additional copy). ($5.00 expedited service fee, mail requests only).
How to obtain: In person at the state building, Austin, internet, mail.

Utah

Who may obtain: Parent, sibling, spouse, child, grandparent, grandchild. (Photo ID required.

Cost: $13.00 ($8.00 per additional copy). ($10.00 additional expedite fee for internet requests).

How to obtain: Mail, internet.

Virginia

Who may obtain: Parent, spouse, child, sibling (Primary document or two secondary documents required).

Cost: $12.00 each (mail and in person), $48.00 (internet).

How to obtain: In person at state building, Richmond, mail, internet.

Vermont

Who may obtain: Not specified (Relationship required for application).

Cost: $9.50 each.

How to obtain: Mail to Health Department.

Washington

Who may obtain: Not specified.

Cost: In person varies by county, $45.50 via VitalChek internet.

How to obtain: Internet, in person at the county health department where the death occurred.
West Virginia

**Who may obtain:** Parent, stepparent, legal guardian, spouse, child, grandchild, great-grandchild (including half and step relationships), sibling (including half and step relationships), mother/father in-law, son/daughter in-law, legal representative of the above, authorized government agency, persons with a demonstrated direct or tangible interest should contact the office for instructions.

**Cost:** $10.00 each.

**How to obtain:** Mail, in person at vital records office, Charleston.

Wisconsin

**Who may obtain:** Spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, person authorized in writing by one of the above, person who can demonstrate that the record is required to protect a personal or property right.

**Cost:** $7.00 ($3.00 each additional copy). ($10.00 each copy for expedited in person and all fax service).

**How to obtain:** In person (Madison), fax, mail.

Wyoming

**Who may obtain:** Immediate family members, attorney representing immediate family member, bank, executors of the estate, insurance company, anyone requiring a certificate for an insurance policy or death benefit of the decedent.

**Cost:** $9.00 each.

**How to obtain:** Mail.

(Note – Many states offer an internet vendor option such as VitalChek for an additional fee).