



“Sunset, by Moyan Brenn, <http://earthincolors.wordpress.com/>”

News from the Center for Health Statistics Concerning the Oregon Death Certificate

Issue: August 2013

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HB 2093 Vital records modernization bill

House Bill 2093, known as the vital records modernization bill passed the Oregon Legislature and was signed by Governor Kitzhaber on June 13, 2013. The new law is effective January 1, 2014. You can read the final (65 page) bill at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/13reg/measpdf/hb2000.dir/hb2093.en.pdf>. The Center for Health Statistics will lead rule making during the summer/early fall to have rules in place by January 1, 2014.

The majority of the law remains the same in content, but there are several changes related to death records:

- Doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants licensed in Washington, Idaho or California may sign Oregon death records.
- Hospitals with more than ten deaths onsite in the previous year will be required to have death records certified in OVERS. We will contact all hospitals in the next few months about this requirement. Fewer than 20 funeral homes do not use the electronic system. It is important that funeral homes not start paper records for deaths that occur in hospitals.
- Public abstract of death reporting ends but the 24-hour notice of receipt of body remains in law. We will be revising the form to make timely reporting (within 24 hours of receiving the body) easier for funeral homes.
- There is a new limitation on how long a funeral home can order certified copies of the death record for

The majority of the law remains the same in content, but there are several changes related to death records...



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families. Beginning January 1, 2014, funeral directors, employees and agents of the funeral home that appears on the death record can order certified copies for family members for only two years following the date of death. After that time, families must order directly from the state. If a funeral home is not listed on the death record the facility cannot order certified copies of the death

record now or in the future.

- Death certificates recorded for property transfers can be short forms (without cause of death information) only. Funeral homes will need to ask families whether any certified copies are needed for property transfers to obtain the correct forms.

If you would like more information, check the vital records website www.healthoregon.org/chs . If you have questions, contact Karen Hampton at Karen.R.Hampton@state.or.us. ❖

Marital status for same-sex couples married outside of Oregon

If the decedent had entered into a domestic partnership or same sex marriage in another state or country, his or her *marital status at time of death*, line #19, must be single. Why, because by law, Oregon only recognizes Oregon Registered Domestic Partners (ORDP).

If the decedent was in an ORDP, select Oregon Registered Domestic Partnership in the marital status. The name of the partner can be provided on line #20, for *spouse's*

name. If the decedent was entered into a domestic partnership or same-sex marriage outside of Oregon, the response for line #20, *spouse's name*, must be left blank.



If you have any questions, please contact JoAnn Jackson, Registration Manager at 971-673-1160 or by email at joann.jackson@state.or.us. ❖

Law change - short form death certificates

In January 2014, a change in Oregon law will require that Oregon county recorders file short form death records only. Currently many families only order long form death certificates.

The use of short form death certificates is often misunderstood. A short form excludes the lower section of the death record filled out by the medical certifier. It provides proof of the fact of death when the cause and manner of death are not needed and when the family wishes to maintain confidentiality about the medical information on the record.

When death records are requested by title companies or when family members file them

with a county recorder, the death record becomes a public record. Only the fact of death is needed to clear title to a car, bank account or property. To maintain confidentiality regarding cause and manner of death, the short form death record should always be used to clear title. Short form death records are available for all deaths filed from 1978 through the present.

You can prepare for the change in law in January 2014 by starting now to explain the use of short forms and by recommending that family members request one or more when they place orders for records. This will prevent having to exchange long forms for short forms when they are rejected for filing.



Electronic vs. paper affidavits

There have been questions about when to use electronic or paper affidavits to amend a death record. Here is a helpful breakdown based on the type of record.

For a fully paper record we always need to have a paper affidavit. Fully paper records cannot be viewed in OVERS by funeral facilities and therefore cannot be amended electronically by the funeral home.

Drop to paper records which are on the way to or while at the County Vital Records office should have a paper affidavit accompany it. However, if the drop to paper record is in transit to or at the State Vital Records office, please wait until the record is registered then submit an electronic amendment.

Finally, for fully electronic records you should submit an electronic amendment. Electronic amendments are processed on a daily basis. If you are unsure where the record is or not wanting to track the record, submit a paper affidavit for correction but note the processing time is longer.

To summarize:

- Fully paper records
 - Always send a paper affidavit
- Dropped to Paper records
 - If the record is at the County Vital

Burial and cremation tags clarification

Burial and cremation tags are available from our office by sending in a *Request for Vital Records Forms and Tags* (Form 45-43). The address for mail orders is provided at the bottom of the form, as is the fax number. Payment should be sent with the order. However, if a billing account is already set

Records Office

- Use a paper affidavit

◦ If the record is on its way to or is at the State Vital Records Office

- Wait for the record to be registered by the State then submit an electronic amendment. If an affidavit was sent with the record to the County Vital Records office then please wait for the State to process that affidavit, don't do an electronic amendment for the same item.
- Don't want to track the record? Send a paper affidavit (processing time does take longer).

- Fully electronic record

◦ Always an electronic amendment

Medical portion amendments, which include date of death, are only to be processed with the original affidavit signed by the same physician that signed the death record. Faxes, photocopies and scanned images are not acceptable. We need the original signature of the physician.

The fax number to send paper affidavits is (971) 673-1201. ❖

up with our office, we will add this charge to your next invoice.

Burial tags are aluminum, and the cost is \$.09 each, or \$4.50 for a roll of 50. Cremation tags are made of stainless steel, and cost \$.20 each, or \$10.00 for a roll of 50.

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It is acceptable to purchase the less-expensive burial tags in lieu of cremation tags. Note that OAR 830-030-0040(6) instructs that “the identifying metal disc must be attached to the outside of the cremation chamber, where it must remain until the cremation process is complete.”

After current supplies of cremation tags are depleted, we will begin using a single metal disk for both burial and cremation. Our *Request for Vital Records Forms and Tags* (Form 45-43) is being updated to offer only one metal disc, at a cost of \$.09 each, or \$4.50 for a roll of 50.

OVERS tips and enhancements

If you use OVERS to create death certificates you will find the following tips and enhancement useful.

1. *Place of death county and country*

Entering the county and country correctly on the “Place of Death” page is important in determining which county vital records office can access and issue certified copies of the death record. If either the county or country fields are left blank or entered incorrectly, the county vital records office will not be able to find the record to issue it. When you enter the county of death, make sure to spell the county correctly and when entering the country of death, make sure to use “United States” as the country. Leaving the country blank or entering it as anything other than United States (for example, entering “USA” or “United States of America”) will prevent the record from being accessed by the



Effective October 1, 2013, please check with our office at 971-673-1180 for availability of the stainless-steel cremation tags **prior to** sending in a pre-paid order. This will avoid incurring any overpayments. We will fill your order and request payment if stainless-steel stock is still available, or let you know that stock has been depleted and quote you a cost for ordering the aluminum tags. ❖



county vital records office.

2. *Printing disposition permits*

There are two ways to print a disposition permit from OVERS. A blank version of the disposition permit is available when you don't have time to start the death record before creating the permit. The blank disposition permit can be hand-typed from your computer and is available from the “Forms” menu, “Print Forms” link.

If you start a death report and wish to access the pre-filled disposition permit you must first sign the death report, then complete the information on the “Disposition Approval” link before you can open and print the disposition permit. (If you use the pre-filled disposition permit remember that you can only do so if you approve of the disposition before requesting medical certification of the death report.)

3. *New Feature: fewer steps to override a yellow edit*

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Overriding yellow edits on a death report is easier in the current version of OVERS. After you override an edit suggestion, you no longer need to validate the page in order for OVERS to recognize the change to the record. OVERS now auto-validates your override saving you a mouse click.

4. **Electronic Medical Certification requests**

If you wish to add information (such as

Funeral home numeric report – a source of useful information

The Center for Health Statistics produces the funeral home numeric report. This report provides the number of death certificates filed by:

- The county where the death occurred;
- The funeral home that handled the disposition; and
- The month when the death occurred.

The report is available in Microsoft Excel format and is updated quarterly until the statistical file is complete in approximately September of the following calendar year.

The numeric report might be useful to funeral

homes as an overview of deaths registered

The numeric report might be useful to funeral homes as an overview of deaths registered monthly through their funeral home.

Online resource roundup

The Center for Health Statistics website is full of useful information and resources. Here are some of our most popular links:

the time of death) to the medical certification request message that you send to doctors who use OVERS make sure to leave spaces between your text entry and the web address link at the end of the message. If you do not leave spaces between your text entry and the OVERS web address link, the web link will be inactive in the email the doctor receives and the doctor will be unable to click on the link to get to the OVERS website. ❖

monthly through their funeral home. It might also be useful to view the number of death certificates per month throughout the state. Another benefit is that it also provides market share for each funeral home by county of death. Please note that:

- The numeric report is not directly comparable to the funeral home billing invoices.
- A funeral home will be listed in each county that they handle a disposition based on the county of death.

To access this report, copy and paste the following URL into your browser, then hit enter: <http://1.usa.gov/19JNqv5> . Once on the web page, click on the most recent file, or the dated file that you are interested in. If this report is of interest to you, please add it to your favorites to make finding the report both quicker and easier in the future. ❖

OVERS information

- Frequently Asked Questions - <http://bit.ly/oversfaq>

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Online resource roundup (Continued from page 5)

Helpful tips on locating a place of death in OVERS, entering special characters in a name, referring a certificate to a medical certifier, and more.

- OVERS User Instruction Manuals - <http://bit.ly/OVERSmanuals> A complete walkthrough of filing a death certificate in OVERS as well as a Quick Start Guide with the basics.
- OVERS enrollment form - <http://bit.ly/overssignup> Complete this form and follow the instructions to sign up for OVERS.

Registration information

- Registration Instructions - <http://1.usa.gov/ORDeathRegistration> Full legal instructions and requirements for completing a death certificate on paper or online.
- Request for Vital Records Forms and

Tags (Form 45-43) - <http://bit.ly/form45-43> Order form to request official supplies such as burial or cremation tags, disinterment permits, and death certificate paper.

- Funeral Home Billing & Indigent Disposition Information - <http://1.usa.gov/19JNqv5> Deaths registered with Oregon Vital Records by county location of funeral home (updated quarterly), as well as forms and instructions for indigent decedents.

External resources

- Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board - <http://www.oregon.gov/mortcem/Pages/index.aspx> .

If you're using Internet Explorer as your browser and you want to bookmark these sites, click the star near the top of the window and click the Favorites tab. To save the page you're on to the list, click "Add to Favorites". ❖

Wanted—Newsletter topics

Have a question or idea for a future newsletter article? Contact Judy Shioishi, at 971-673-1166 or judy.shioishi@state.or.us. Judy collects ideas for articles and then shares them with the writing team.

Thank you to the contributors of this newsletter:

Karen Cooper, Karen Hampton, Carol Sanders, Melissa Franklin, JoAnn Jackson, Linda Reynolds, Patricia Thompson, Megan Welter, Kerry Lionadh, Cynthia Roeser, Karen Rangan, Carolyn Hogg, Jon Sams, Joyce Grant-Worley, Lynda Jackson, Jennifer Woodward, Kara Rosenthal, Megan Welter.

We're just a phone call way

Have a question? Try asking one of the helpful CHS staff listed below.

Frequent Contacts

CHS Managers

Cause of Death Melissa Franklin 971-673-1144	OVERS Helpdesk 971-673-0279	State Registrar Jennifer Woodward 971-673-1185	OVERS Manager Karen Hampton 971-673-1191
Death Corrections Patty Thompson 971-673-1163		Amendments/Certification Manager Carol Sanders 971-673-1178	Data Processing Supervisor Cynthia Roeser 971-673-0478
		Statistics Manager Joyce Grant-Worley 971-673-1156	Certification Supervisor Karen Rangan 971-673-1182
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The Center for Health Statistics' office is located at:

800 N.E. Oregon St., Suite 225
 Portland, OR 97232-2162

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14050
 Portland, OR 97293-0050

General Information: 971-673-1180

To Order Vital Records: 1-888-896-4988

Website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/PHD/ODPE/CHS>

OVERS website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/overs/Pages/index.aspx>

