

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE
TITLE 3. VITAL STATISTICS
CHAPTER 193. DEATH RECORDS

Sec. 193.001. FORM OF CERTIFICATE. (a) The department shall prescribe the form and contents of death certificates and fetal death certificates.

(a-1) In prescribing each form under Subsection (a), the department shall ensure that the form instructs the person required to file the death certificate or fetal death certificate to:

(1) enter the date in the standard order of "month, day, year"; and

(2) spell out the name of the month when entering the date.

(b) The social security number shall be recorded on the death certificate and on any other records related to the death.

(c) The department shall require death certificates and fetal death certificates to include the name of the place and the specific number of the plot, crypt, lawn crypt, or niche in which a decedent's remains will be interred or, if the remains will not be interred, the place and manner of other disposition.

(c-1) The department shall require death certificates to include the county where the decedent died and the decedent's county of last legal residence.

(d) The department and each local registrar shall make the information provided under Subsection (c) available to the public and may collect a fee in an amount prescribed under Section [191.0045](#) for providing that service.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 502, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 556, Sec. 73, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 557 (H.B. [2940](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0556, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1074 (S.B. [545](#)), Sec. 2, eff.

September 1, 2023.

Sec. 193.002. PERSON REQUIRED TO FILE. The person in charge of interment or in charge of removal of a body from a registration district for disposition shall:

- (1) obtain and file the death certificate or fetal death certificate;
- (2) enter on the certificate the information relating to disposition of the body;
- (3) sign the certificate; and
- (4) file the certificate electronically as specified by the state registrar.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 302 (H.B. [1739](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

The following section was amended by the 89th Legislature. Pending publication of the current statutes, see H.B. [1610](#), 89th Legislature, Regular Session, for amendments affecting the following section.

Sec. 193.0025. EXPEDITED DEATH CERTIFICATES FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES IN CERTAIN COUNTIES. (a) This section applies only to a county:

(1) with an office of medical examiner established in accordance with Section 1, Article [49.25](#), Code of Criminal Procedure; and

(2) for which the commissioners court of the county by resolution elects for this section to apply.

(b) This section does not apply to a county that entered into an agreement with another county to create a medical examiners district under Section 1-a, Article [49.25](#), Code of Criminal Procedure, unless:

(1) the office of medical examiner is located in the county and the county has adopted a resolution described by Subsection (a)(2); or

(2) notwithstanding Subsection (a), the county elects

for this section to apply in the agreement creating the district.

(c) An individual may submit to the person required to file a death certificate under Section 193.002 a written request for the person to expedite the completion of a decedent's death certificate if the requestor demonstrates that:

(1) the expedited completion is necessary for religious purposes;

(2) the decedent's remains will be interred, entombed, buried, cremated, or otherwise laid to rest in a foreign country; and

(3) the requestor is authorized to obtain a copy of the death certificate.

(d) A person who receives a request under Subsection (c) shall issue a copy of the decedent's death certificate to the requestor not later than 48 hours after the time the person receives the request unless an inquest will be conducted for the decedent.

(e) For purposes of completing an expedited death certificate under this section, a medical examiner may:

(1) perform a medical examination; and

(2) complete the medical certification, provided:

(A) the medical examiner has access to the decedent's medical history relevant to the death;

(B) the decedent's death is due to natural causes; and

(C) the medical examiner serves as medical examiner of the county in which the death occurred.

(f) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 233 (H.B. 1011), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 193.003. TIME AND PLACE FOR FILING DEATH CERTIFICATE.

(a) Not later than the 10th day after the date of a death that occurs in this state, a death certificate shall be filed with the local registrar of the registration district in which:

(1) the death occurs; or

(2) the body is found, if the place of death is not

known.

(b) Subject to department rules, a certificate of a fetal death that occurs in this state shall be filed with the local registrar of the registration district in which:

(1) the fetal death occurs; or

(2) the body is found, if the place of fetal death is not known.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0557, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 193.004. PERSONAL AND MEDICAL INFORMATION. (a) The person required to file a death certificate shall obtain the required personal information from a competent person with knowledge of the facts.

(b) The person required to file a fetal death certificate shall obtain the required personal information from the person best qualified to furnish the information.

(c) A person required to obtain information under this section shall obtain the information over the signature of the person who furnishes the information.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1425, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 193.0041. DISCIPLINARY ACTION PROHIBITED. A state agency that licenses a person required to file a death certificate under this chapter may not take disciplinary action against the person for failure to timely file the certificate if the person supplies written documentation that the person has made a good faith effort to file the certificate within the time required by Section 193.003(a) and the failure to timely file the certificate results from circumstances beyond the person's control.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 636 (H.B. 755), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

The following section was amended by the 89th Legislature. Pending

publication of the current statutes, see H.B. [1610](#), 89th Legislature, Regular Session, for amendments affecting the following section.

Sec. 193.005. PERSONAL INFORMATION. (a) A person required to file a death certificate or fetal death certificate shall obtain the required medical certification from the decedent's attending physician, or a physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse of the decedent, if the death occurred under the care of the person in connection with the treatment of the condition or disease process that contributed to the death.

(a-1) Repealed by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 733 (H.B. [4048](#)), Sec. 2, eff. June 15, 2021.

(b) The attending physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse shall complete the medical certification not later than five days after receiving the death certificate.

(c) An associate physician, the chief medical officer of the institution where the death occurred, or the physician who performed an autopsy on the decedent may complete the medical certification if:

(1) the attending physician, the physician assistant, and the advanced practice registered nurse described by Subsection (a) are unavailable;

(2) the attending physician, the physician assistant, or the advanced practice registered nurse described by Subsection (a) approves; and

(3) the person completing the medical certification has access to the medical history of the case and the death is due to natural causes.

(d) If a death or fetal death occurs without medical attendance or is otherwise subject to Chapter [49](#), Code of Criminal Procedure, the person required to file the death or fetal death certificate shall notify the appropriate authority of the death.

(e) A person conducting an inquest required by Chapter [49](#), Code of Criminal Procedure, shall:

(1) complete the medical certification not later than five days after receiving the death or fetal death certificate; and

(2) state on the medical certification the disease that caused the death or, if the death was from external causes, the means of death and whether the death was probably accidental, suicidal, or homicidal, and any other information required by the state registrar to properly classify the death.

(e-1) The medical certification on a death certificate must include either the term "Fentanyl Poisoning" or the term "Fentanyl Toxicity" if:

(1) a toxicology examination reveals a controlled substance listed in Penalty Group 1-B present in the body of the decedent in an amount or concentration that is considered to be lethal by generally accepted scientific standards; and

(2) the results of an autopsy performed on the decedent are consistent with an opioid overdose as the cause of death.

(f) If the identity of the decedent is unknown, the person conducting the inquest shall obtain and forward to the Department of Public Safety:

(1) the decedent's fingerprints;

(2) information concerning the decedent's hair color, eye color, height, weight, deformities, and tattoo marks; and

(3) other facts required for assistance in identifying the decedent.

(g) If the medical certification cannot be completed in a timely manner, the person required to complete the medical certification shall give the funeral director or the person acting as funeral director notice of the reason for the delay. Final disposition of the body may not be made unless specifically authorized by the person responsible for completing the medical certification.

(h) The person completing the medical certification shall submit the information and attest to its validity using an electronic process approved by the state registrar.

(i) On receipt of autopsy results or other information that would change the information in the medical certification on the death certificate, the appropriate certifier shall immediately report the change in a manner prescribed by the department to amend

the death certificate.

(j) The death certificate of a decedent who was an inmate of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice at the time of death and who was lawfully executed shall classify the manner of death as death caused by judicially ordered execution.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1425, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 285 (H.B. 93), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 302 (H.B. 1739), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 412 (S.B. 919), Sec. 1, eff. June 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 509 (H.B. 2950), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 733 (H.B. 4048), Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2021.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 733 (H.B. 4048), Sec. 2, eff. June 15, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 910 (H.B. 6), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

The following section was amended by the 89th Legislature. Pending publication of the current statutes, see H.B. 39, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, for amendments affecting the following section.

Sec. 193.006. INFORMATION RELATING TO VETERANS. (a) This section applies to the death certificate of a person who:

(1) served in a war, campaign, or expedition of the United States, the Confederate States of America, or the Republic of Texas;

(2) was the wife or widow of a person who served in a war, campaign, or expedition of the United States, the Confederate States of America, or the Republic of Texas; or

(3) at the time of death was in the service of the United States.

(b) The funeral director or the person in charge of the

disposition of the body shall supply on the reverse side of the death certificate:

- (1) the organization in which service was rendered;
- (2) the serial number on the discharge papers or the adjusted service certificate; and
- (3) the name and mailing address of the decedent's next of kin or next friend.

(c) When the death certificate is filed locally, the local registrar shall immediately notify the nearest congressionally chartered veteran organizations.

(d) When the death certificate is filed with the vital statistics unit, the state registrar shall notify the Texas Veterans Commission.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 3.0558, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 193.007. DELAYED REGISTRATION OF DEATH. (a) A death that occurred more than 10 days but less than one year before the date of an application for registration of death may be recorded on a death certificate and submitted for filing with the local registrar of the registration district in which the death occurred.

(b) To file a record of a death that occurred in this state but was not registered within one year of the date of death, a person shall submit a record of the death to the county probate court in the county in which the death occurred.

(c) The department shall furnish a form for filing records under this section. Records submitted under this section must be on the form furnished by the department. The state registrar may accept a certificate that is verified as provided by this section.

(d) The certificate must be supported by the affidavit of:

(1) the physician last in attendance on the decedent or the funeral director who buried the body; or

(2) if the affidavit of the physician or funeral director cannot be obtained:

(A) any person who was acquainted with the facts surrounding the death when the death occurred; and

(B) another person who was acquainted with the facts surrounding the death but who is not related to the decedent by consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code.

(e) For each application under this section, the court shall collect a \$1 fee. The court retains 50 cents of the fee and the remaining 50 cents is allocated to the clerk of the court for recording the certificate.

(f) Not later than the seventh day after the date on which a certificate is accepted and ordered filed by a court under this section, the clerk of the court shall forward to the vital statistics unit:

(1) the certificate; and

(2) an order from the court that the state registrar accept the certificate.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 561, Sec. 29, eff. Aug. 26, 1991; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 5.95(27), eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1425, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.0559, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 193.008. BURIAL-TRANSIT PERMIT. (a) A burial-transit permit issued under the law and rules of a place outside of this state in which a death or fetal death occurred authorizes the transportation of the body in this state. A cemetery or crematory shall accept the permit as authorization for burial, cremation, or other disposal of the body in this state.

(b) The department shall prescribe the form and contents of the burial-transit permit.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 193.009. BURIAL RECORDS. (a) The person in charge of premises on which interments are made shall keep a record of the

bodies interred or otherwise disposed of on the premises.

(b) The records must include for each decedent:

- (1) the decedent's name;
- (2) the place of death;
- (3) the date of interment or disposal;
- (4) the name and address of the funeral director; and
- (5) any other information required by the state registrar.

(c) The records are open to official inspection at all times.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 193.010. CERTIFICATE OF DEATH BY CATASTROPHE. (a) In this section, "catastrophe" means the occurrence of a substantial force that causes widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property and from which it is not reasonable to assume that a person could survive, including:

- (1) flood, earthquake, tornado, or other natural disaster;
- (2) explosion, fire, or destruction of a building;
- (3) the crash of a motor vehicle, train, or airplane involving more than one person; or
- (4) the overtaking of more than one person by fire, water, earth, or other substance.

(b) A local registrar shall issue and file a certificate of death by catastrophe for a person if:

(1) an affidavit is submitted to the registrar stating that:

(A) the person was last reasonably believed to be at the scene of a catastrophe;

(B) at least 10 days have passed since the day of the catastrophe;

(C) a diligent search has been made by a governmental authority and the authority has concluded the search for the person;

(D) the catastrophe was not intentionally caused by the person; and

(E) the affiant:

(i) does not know whether the person is alive or dead;

(ii) has not received any information about the person's status since the catastrophe and, barring the person's death, would have received information about the person's status;

(iii) is not aware of any custody or guardianship issues involving the person, if the person is a minor or a person for whom a guardian has been appointed; and

(iv) is not aware of any reasonable motive for the person to disappear or for another person to abduct the person; and

(2) a written statement signed by an agent of the governmental authority that conducts a search under Subdivision (1)(C) is submitted to the registrar stating that the governmental authority conducted and concluded a search for the person.

(c) The department may issue a certificate of death by catastrophe for a minor or a person for whom a guardian has been appointed who is the subject of a custody or guardianship dispute only if all parties to the dispute submit an affidavit under Subsection (b).

(d) An insurer shall accept as proof of death of an insured a certificate of death by catastrophe issued under this section.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1098, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 193.011. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON SUICIDE DATA.

(a) In this section, "authorized entity" means a medical examiner, a local registrar, a local health authority, a local mental health authority, a community mental health center, a mental health center that acts as a collection agent for the suicide data reported by community mental health centers, or any other political subdivision of this state.

(b) An authorized entity may enter into a memorandum of understanding with another authorized entity to share suicide data that does not name a deceased individual. The shared data may include:

(1) the deceased individual's date of birth, race or

national origin, gender, and zip code of residence;

(2) any school or college the deceased individual was attending at the time of death;

(3) the suicide method used by the deceased individual;

(4) the deceased individual's status as a veteran or member of the armed services; and

(5) the date of the deceased individual's death.

(c) The suicide data an authorized entity receives or provides under Subsection (b) is not confidential.

(d) An authorized entity that receives suicide data under a memorandum of understanding authorized by this section may periodically release suicide data that does not name a deceased individual to an agency or organization with recognized expertise in suicide prevention. The agency or organization may use suicide data received by the agency or organization under this subsection only for suicide prevention purposes.

(e) An authorized entity or an employee or agent of an authorized entity is not civilly or criminally liable for receiving or providing suicide data that does not name a deceased individual and that may be shared under a memorandum of understanding authorized by this section.

(f) This section does not prohibit the sharing of data as authorized by other law.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 100 (H.B. [1067](#)), Sec. 2, eff. May 23, 2009.

Sec. 193.012. NOTICE OF CERTAIN DEATH CERTIFICATE AMENDMENTS. For a death certificate that is not a pending death certificate, a person who submits to the department a request for an amendment to modify the medical certification information on the certificate shall provide in the manner prescribed by the department written notice of the modification to a decedent's next of kin.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 12 (H.B. [723](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2021.