

FAQ- Death Certificates

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What is a death certificate?

A legal document that records information about an individual's death. It is signed by a licensed physician, medical examiner or coroner and is issued by the government. The death certificate also contains vital statistics information.

How does the process work?

We will ask you the necessary vital information questions; generate the death certificate in the State Registration System; work with the appropriate physician, coroner or medical examiner to get the medical portion of the certificate completed; and facilitate it being registered with the county of death.

How do I obtain a death certificate?

We will obtain the initial set requested on behalf of the family. If more certified copies are needed later, each county in Georgia has a vital records office where additional copies can be purchased.

How long does the process take?

This can vary depending on the circumstances of death, but generally, 2 weeks is average for a natural death. If an autopsy was performed or an investigation is ongoing, it is usually no less than 90 days but can be 6+ months. We are very aware that families need these in order to handle many affairs after a death occurs. We advocate for you in processing these as efficiently as possible; however, we ask for your understanding and patience. While we oversee the process, multiple parties are involved and often their completion is not as timely as we'd like.



Who can request a death certificate?

Per State regulation, one must have direct and tangible interest to the decedent- primary family members or legal representatives of the family.

How much do they cost?

In Georgia, the first certified copy costs \$25 and additional copies requested at that same time are \$5 each. Each separate request follows that same fee schedule.

For what purposes do I need a death certificate?

While this list might not be exhaustive for your situation, here are some common matters that require death certificates.

- Settling an estate
- Closing bank accounts and credit cards
- Claiming life insurance benefits
- Filing annual income taxes with State Revenue Dept. & IRS
- Selling or transferring title of real property and/or vehicles, boats
- Managing pensions / retirement accounts
- Managing financial investments- stocks, bonds, annuities
- Applying for Social Security survivor benefits
- Canceling vehicle registrations
- Applying for veteran's benefits
- Retaining for personal records or family genealogy

How many should I request?

Use the above list as a guide to determine your needed amount. We typically suggest requesting 1-2 more than you think you will need to ensure you have enough. Most families request 5-10 certified copies. Some entities may accept photocopies or may return your certified copy once you present it to them.

