

# FAQ- Death Certificates

---

	April 2025	
--	------------	--

---



---

## **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.

