

NYC: After Life

A Guide to the
Death Certificate
Application Process

New York City Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

nyc.gov/health/deathcertificates



A death certificate is an official legal document regarding a person's death. This brochure provides information to make it easier for New Yorkers to get death certificates and services in New York City (NYC).

Death Reporting

Deaths that occur in NYC must be reported by a medical professional to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) within 24 hours of the time of death.

Death Certificate Registration

The decedent's (deceased person's) health care provider reports the decedent's fact of death and cause of death to the NYC Health Department.

The funeral director or the medical facility reports the decedent's personal information (such as date of birth, usual residential address, occupation) and final disposition (such as burial, cremation, entombment) to the NYC Health Department.

The NYC Health Department registers the death and issues a certified copy of a death certificate upon the request of either the reporting funeral director or an entitled party* (for example, spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, person in control of the disposition).

Requesting a Death Certificate

The NYC Health Department issues death certificates for deaths that occur in NYC.

When?

A death certificate is available once the death is reported and registered with the NYC Health Department.

Who?

Entitled parties can order a death certificate at any time. Funeral directors can order a death certificate for up to one year after the date of death.

How?

Due to COVID-19, in-person ordering of NYC death certificates is limited to emergency requests. For emergencies, email the Office of Vital Records Services at nycdohvr@health.nyc.gov or call **311**. For nonemergencies, order death certificates online or by mail:

- Online: Visit vitalcheck.com, authorized resource for official, government-issued online vital records and the fastest way to order.
- By mail:
 - Visit nyc.gov/health and search for **death certificate application** to download the application, then complete, sign and notarize it.
 - Be sure to include your email address and enclose identification and signatures as indicated, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
 - Calculate the fees and enclose your payment (\$15 per copy for mail orders; money order or check made payable to “NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene”; cash is not accepted).

For support, call **311** or 212-NEW-YORK (212-639-9675) outside NYC or email nycdohvr@health.nyc.gov.

Note: A death certificate can be issued even if the final disposition has not been determined. As long as the certificate details are reported, it can be registered with an interim or temporary disposition.

Finding a Funeral Home

How do I find a funeral home?

- The New York State (NYS) Funeral Directors Association offers a list of licensed funeral homes at nysfda.org/index.php/news-events/find-a-funeral-home.
- The NYS Bureau of Funeral Directing offers a list of licensed funeral firms at health.ny.gov/professionals/funeral_director/reports/openfirms_alpha.

What if I cannot afford to pay for funeral services and need a death certificate?

- If a funeral home is not involved, an entitled party* can order the death certificate. For information, call **311** or visit nyc.gov/health and search for **death certificates**.

*Entitled party: Spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, niece/nephew, aunt/uncle, great grandchild, great-great grandchild, grandniece/grandnephew, informant listed on the death certificate or person in control of the disposition. If you are not listed above, you must document your right to get a death certificate. For questions, call **311**.

COVID-19 Resources

- NYC: Visit nyc.gov/covid19 or nyc.gov/health/coronavirus.
- NYS: Visit covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov.
- Health Resources and Services Administration: Visit hrsa.gov and search for **COVID-19 resources**.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.
- National Institutes of Health: Visit nih.gov and search for **coronavirus**.
- NYC's Legal Services Access Line: Visit legalservicesnyc.org/what-we-do/covid-resources or call 917-661-4500.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: Visit fema.gov and search for **COVID-19 funeral assistance**.

General Resources

NYC Well

- For free, confidential mental health support from trained counselors 24/7 and in more than 200 languages, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat at nyc.gov/nycwell.

General Resources (Continued)

NYC Health Department

- To order or correct a death certificate, visit nyc.gov/health/deathcertificates.

NYC Human Resources Administration

- Department of Social Services: Visit nyc.gov and search for **burial assistance**.

NYC Department of Veterans' Services

- For information on filing a Veterans Affairs claim, visit nyc.gov/vetclaims.
- For information on arranging a funeral or burial for a veteran, visit nyc.gov/vetburials.

Social Security Administration

- Visit ssa.gov and search for **survivors benefits** and **burial funds**.

General NYC Government Information

- Call **311** or 212-NEW-YORK (212-639-9675).
- NYC employee benefits:
 - District Council 37: 212-815-1000; dc37.net
 - NYC Deferred Compensation Plan: 212-306-7760; nyc.gov/olr
 - NYC Employees' Retirement System: 347-643-3000; nycers.org