

**CHANGES UNIT FAQ'S FOR  
CHANGING OR CORRECTING DEATH CERTIFICATES  
October 14, 2011**

**WHO CAN CHANGE, AMEND OR CORRECT A DEATH RECORD**

**Q: Who is eligible to apply to change, amend or correct a registered death record?**

A: The following list indicates who can request a change, amendment or correction to a registered death record and what information they are eligible to request be changed:

1. Next of kin to decedent:
  - Personal information only
2. Funeral Service Licensee:
  - Personal information on behalf of the family
  - Administrative errors made by funeral home
3. Certifying Physician:
  - Date of death
  - Place of death
  - Medical facts of death
4. Medical Examiner:
  - Manner of death
  - Cause of death

The certifying physician cannot change the manner or cause of death unless he/she certified in the capacity of a medical examiner or deputy medical examiner.

**NEXT OF KIN REQUIREMENTS FOR CHANGING OR CORRECTING A DEATH RECORD**

**Q: If I am the deceased person's next of kin and eligible to make a request to change, amend or correct a death record, what do I need to provide to the Vital Records office to begin the process?**

A: Changes to a Michigan death record require a completed and signed application. The completed application includes all items listed below:

1. A non-refundable fee of \$40.00 made payable to the State of Michigan
2. A completed and signed change/correct application  
([http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deathcorrpublic\\_6733\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deathcorrpublic_6733_7.pdf))
3. Photo ID of applicant(s)
4. Documentation showing the applicant is next of kin- suggested documents include:
  - Court order
  - Birth certificate
  - Marriage license
5. Two dated documents that verify the correction requested. If requesting a marital status change, additional documents are needed to complete the change. (See the question on how to change marital status for the documentation needed depending on what is being changed.)

Suggested documents for above changes other than marital status:

- Court order
- Birth Certificate
- Death Certificate
- Marriage license
- Driver license
- Property tax records
- Voter registration

Please remember that no action will be taken to change or correct a record until all the above items are received in the Vital Records Office.

### **FUNERAL HOME REQUIREMENTS FOR CHANGING OR CORRECTING A DEATH RECORD**

**Q: If I am the funeral home responsible for the decedent, what do I need to provide to the Vital Records office to begin the process?**

**A:** Changes to a Michigan Death record require a completed application. The completed application includes all items listed below:

1. A non-refundable fee of \$40.00 made payable to the State of Michigan
2. A completed and signed changes application
3. If personal information on behalf of next of kin:
  - Two dated documents that verify the correction requested.  
If requesting marital status change, additional documents are needed to complete the change. (See the question on how to change marital status for the documentation needed depending on what is being changed.)

Suggested documents for above changes:

- Court order
- Birth Certificate
- Death Certificate
- Marriage license
- Driver license
- Property tax records
- Voter registration

4. If an administrative error was made by the funeral home, work sheet showing the administrative error.

Please remember that no action will be taken to change or correct a record until all the above items are received in the Vital Records Office.

### **CERTIFYING PHYSICIAN REQUIREMENTS FOR CHANGING OR CORRECTING A DEATH RECORD**

**Q: If I am the certifying physician of the decedent, what do I need to provide to the Vital Records office to begin the process?**

A: Changes to a Michigan death record of the medical facts by the certifying physician requires the following:

1. A non-refundable fee of \$40.00 made payable to the State of Michigan
2. A completed and signed Physician Application to Correct Michigan Death Record  
For deaths occurring prior to January 1, 2004:  
([http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deathcorrcertphys\\_6729\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deathcorrcertphys_6729_7.pdf))  
For deaths occurring after December 31, 2003:  
([http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deathcorrectphys\\_112494\\_7.after\\_1-1-04.PDF](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deathcorrectphys_112494_7.after_1-1-04.PDF))

## **WHAT ITEMS CAN BE CHANGED OR CORRECTED ON A DEATH RECORD**

**Q: What items can I change or correct on a Michigan death record?**

A: Any item listed on the current death record form can be changed or corrected. Many items listed on older records are no longer required on the current form. Since those changes will not be displayed in the new format, only items on our current form can be changed.

## **ANCESTRY CHANGE REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change the Ancestry on a Michigan death record?**

A: The ancestry of a decedent may be changed one time by an eligible applicant without documentation being submitted. Any subsequent change or correction would require one document that verifies ancestry.

## **RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS CHANGE REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change the residence address of the decedent on a Michigan death certificate?**

A: The residence may be changed by submitting one document dated at least one year prior to the date of the change which indicates the correct address to be changed.

## **AGE OR BIRTH DATE CORRECTION REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change or correct the age or date of birth for the decedent?**

A: A request to change or correct the age of the decedent cannot be permitted when it would cause the age to be inconsistent with the date of birth.

To change the date of birth:

- A copy of the decedent's birth certificate

**OR**

- Two documents containing the correct date of birth dated more than five (5) years prior to the decedent's death.

## **BIRTH PLACE CHANGE OR CORRECTION REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change or correct the birth place of the decedent?**

- A: To change or correct the decedent's place of birth, please submit the following:
- A copy of the decedent's birth certificate
- OR**
- Two documents dated at least five (5) years or more prior to the date of death which indicates the correct birth place.

### **CAUSE OF DEATH CHANGE REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change the cause of death?**

A: The cause of death can only be changed by an eligible physician or medical examiner.

### **DATE OF DEATH REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change the date of death?**

A: The date of death can only be changed by an eligible physician or medical examiner.

### **PARENTAL INFORMATION: REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDING INFORMATION**

**Q; How do I add the name of one or both parents if they are missing on the certificate of death?**

- A: To add the name of one or both parents when their name was omitted on the death certificate:
1. If the application is received within one year of the decedent's death, no documentation is required.
  2. If the application is received more than one year after the decedent's death, one document is required to make the change showing the correct information. The decedent's birth certificate would be accepted to add parent(s) names if parent's name is listed on the birth certificate.

### **PARENTAL INFORMATION: REQUIREMENTS FOR CHANGING OR CORRECTING NAMES**

**Q: How do I change the name of a parent on a death certificate?**

- A: For a name change, the documents submitted must establish the association between the person named and the decedent.
1. If the application is submitted within one year of the decedent's death, one document must be submitted with the correct information.
  2. If the application is submitted more than one year after the decedent's death, two documents are required with the correct information.

### **MARITAL STATUS CHANGE REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change the marital status of the decedent on a death certificate?**

A: Due to the resolution of financial and legal affairs after a death, close attention to this type of change is warranted. The marital status can be changed with a court determination of legal heirs or by the following means:

**From Married to Divorced:**

- If the surviving spouse is named on a death record: the divorce decree of the decedent and the surviving spouse listed on the certificate of death
- If another spouse is listed on the death record: documentation that the decedent never married the recorded spouse

**From Married to Widowed:**

- A death certificate of the spouse that is named on the death certificate

**From Divorced or Never Married to Widowed:**

- A marriage license
- The death certificate of spouse

**From Never Married to Married:**

- A marriage license

**From Widowed to Married:**

- A marriage license
- A document created subsequent to the death which indicates that the spouse survived the decedent

**From Divorced to Married:**

- A marriage license
- Evidence of residence of the decedent and spouse over the period from the marriage to the date of death
- Official statements that no divorce occurred from each state of residence for the entire period of their residence in that particular state.

**OR**

- Marriage license
- Determination of heirs from the probate court that names the spouse

**OR**

- A marriage license
- Social Security benefit statement created as a result of the death that names the spouse

**To Correct to Never Married:**

- History of the residence of the decedent since the age of 16
- Official statement that no marriage occurred for each state of residence

**DECEDENT NAME: REQUIREMENTS FOR CHANGING OR CORRECTING**

**Q: How do I change the name of the decedent?**

A: Changes to the decedent's name where identification is not an issue, changing a nickname or an initial to a proper name is considered an omission:

1. If the application is received within one year of death, no document is required.
2. If the application is received more than one year after date of death, one document which identified the name is required.

To change the decedent's name due to error:

1. If the application is received within one year of decedent's death, one document in support of the correct name is required.
2. If the application is received more than one year from decedent's death, two documents are required. Documents must establish that the information is related to the decedent, as in a birth or marriage certificate, which records parentage in common with the death certificate.

#### **DECEDENT NAME: REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDING ADDITIONAL LEGAL NAMES**

**Q: The Decedent had legally used names other than the one listed on the death certificate. How do I request to have the alias name also listed on the death certificate?**

A: An alias name for the decedent may be added when supported by one document. To change an alias already listed would require similar documentation.

#### **INFORMANT NAME CHANGE REQUIREMENTS**

**Q: How do I change the informant's name on a death certificate?**

A: Changes to the informant's name may be requested by the funeral home licensee named on death record with an application only. For other applicants, one document which establishes the correct name is required.