

## Changes Unit FAQ's for Changing, Correcting or Amending Death Certificates

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### **Who can change, amend or correct a death record**

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

A: The following is who can request to amend, correct or make a change 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

Certifying physician cannot change the manner or cause of death unless he certified in the capacity of a medical examiner or deputy medical examiner.

### **Next of kin requirements for amending, correcting or changing a death record**

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

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

1. A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 made payable to State of Michigan
2. A completed and signed Changes application (Application to Change Death)
3. Photo ID of applicant(s)
4. Documentation showing next of kin- suggests 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, amend or correct a record until all the above items are received into the Vital Records Office.

### **Funeral Service requirements for amending, correcting or changing a death record**

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

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

1. A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 made payable to State of Michigan
2. A completed and signed Changes application  
Deaths occurring before January 1, 2004: (Application Death Prior 1-1-04)  
Deaths occurring after December 31, 2003: (Application Death After 12-31-03)
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 administrative error made by funeral service, work sheet showing the administrative error.

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

### **Certifying physician requirements for amending, correcting or changing 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 the Michigan Death record of the medical facts by the Certifying Physician requires the following:

1. A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 made payable to State of Michigan
2. A completed and signed Physician Application to Correct Michigan Death Record

### **What items can be changed on a death record**

Q: What items can I change on a Michigan death certificate?

A: Any item listed on our current form can be amended, corrected or changed. Many items listed on older certificates 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 the Michigan death certificate?

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 resident address of the decedent on the Michigan death certificate?

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

### **Age or birth date correction requirements**

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

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

To change the date of birth:

- Copy of the decedent's birth certificate
- OR**
- Two documents containing the correct date of birth dated more than 5 years prior to the decedent's death.

### **Birth place correction requirements**

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

A: To change the decedent's place of birth, submit the following:

- Copy of the decedent's birth certificate

**OR**

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

**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 after one year of the decedent's death, one document is required to make the change showing the correct information. 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 amending, correcting or changing names**

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

A: In the case of a change of name, the documents submitted must establish the association between the person named and the decedent.

1. If application is submitted within one year of the decedent's death, one document must be submitted with correct information.
2. If application is submitted more than one year of decedent's death, two documents are required with correct information.

**Marital status change requirements**

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

A: Due to resolution of financial and legal affairs after death, close attention to this type of change is warranted. The marital status can be changed with a court determination of Legal Heirs or the marital status change requirements are listed below:

From Married to Divorced:

- If surviving spouse is named on death record: the divorce decree of the decedent and the surviving spouse listed on the certificate of death
- If other 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 indicated 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

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 amending, correcting or changing**

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 application is received within one year of death, no document is required.
2. If 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 application is received within one year of decedent's death, one document in support of the correct name is required.
2. If 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 other names than the one listed on the death certificate, how do I have the alias name 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 name of the informant's on a death certificate?

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

**Residency change requirements**

Q: How do I change the residency of the decedent?

A: To change the residency of the decedent, one document which establishes the decedent's residence at or near the time of death generally created 1 year prior to the event.