



# Obtaining or Amending a Massachusetts Death Certificate for COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Applicants

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) is providing financial assistance for families that incurred COVID-19-related funeral expenses. One requirement for application is a certified death certificate attributing the death directly or indirectly to COVID-19. FEMA will reimburse families for costs associated with obtaining death certificates. More information about benefits and application requirements are on the FEMA website: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance> or by calling 844-684-6333.

## Obtaining a Certified Copy of a Death Certificate

If a person died in Massachusetts, certified copies of the death certificate can be obtained from:

- The city or town where the person died, or
- The city or town where the person resided (if in Massachusetts), or
- The State Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (RVRS).

To obtain a copy from RVRS, please see the detailed ordering information at the link below:

<https://www.mass.gov/ordering-a-birth-marriage-or-death-certificate>. For more information, contact RVRS at [vital.recordsrequest@mass.gov](mailto:vital.recordsrequest@mass.gov) or at (617) 740-2600, or the city/town of death or residence. Fees for certified copies of death records vary, depending on where they are purchased.

## Amending a Death Certificate

If you believe a person’s death certificate should, but does not reference COVID-19, applicants should contact the medical certifier (the physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) that provided the medical information for the death record or the deceased individual’s primary care provider (PCP). If appropriate, the certifier or PCP will initiate the amendment with either the City or Town Clerk (or Boston Registrar) where the death occurred or with RVRS. For medical examiner cases, amendments must be initiated by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

The medical certifier or PCP may provide initial documentation by mail or email to the city/town of the decedent’s death or residence, or to RVRS. Upon receipt of the request for amendment, the city/town or RVRS will prepare a corrected death certificate and verify the accuracy of the prepared certificate with the certifier or PCP.

- If by mail, the correspondence should appear on official letterhead of the medical practice or medical facility.
- If by email, the sender’s email address should be an official email address of a medical practice or facility.
- The request must include contact information for the certifier including name, title, address, license number, email, and fax number.

The reference to COVID-19 on the death certificate may appear as one of the causes of death and/or as a contributing condition. The death certificate must indicate the death was caused by, may have been caused by, or was likely a result of COVID-19. The documentation from the medical certifier or PCP should list all causes-of-death and all contributing conditions exactly as they should appear on the death certificate, including time intervals. Examples:

a. Respiratory failure	24 hrs	a. Respiratory failure	5 hrs
b. (Due to) Pneumonia	5 days	b. (Due to) Pneumonia	3 days
c. (Due to) COVID-19	10 days	c. (Due to) Pulmonary hypertension	2 years
Contributing conditions: hypertension		Contributing conditions: probable COVID-19	

Fees for corrections and amendments vary depending on where they are performed. For additional information about amending a death certificate, please contact RVRS at: [vip-amend@mass.gov](mailto:vip-amend@mass.gov) or the city/town where the death occurred or where the decedent resided.