

Death Certificate Information

Note: This information is meant to act only as a *guide*; certain laws and policies may cause the below listed information to be different. Consider consulting with an attorney.

There are two types of death certificates, **long** forms and **short** forms. You will need to decide which type of death certificate you need. ***The long form shows the cause of death, the short form does not.*** The reason there is a short form death certificate is for compliance with HIPPA laws and Privacy Rights. The places that usually ask for the long-form death certificate are Life Insurance Companies, Pensions and/or Retirement Accounts; all other entities can only accept the short-form death certificates.

Social Security: Waud's Funeral Home will contact social security through the Electronic Death Registry System. You do not need to send social security a death certificate. Exception: if there are minor children involved, or there is a "fail-name" alert because the name on the death certificate and the name on file at the social security office do not match (example: Francis Smith vs. Frank Smith).

Social Security pays retroactively when a person has lived an entire month. They are always a month behind. They do not prorate the month (example: if someone passes away on March 30th and gets a social security check a few days or weeks later, it would have to be returned). In most cases, the checks are automatically deposited and therefore can be withdrawn the same way by the social security office when they are notified of the death. If you have questions or concerns, you can contact their office at 1-800-772-1213. There is a \$255 death benefit, but it is for surviving spouses and /or minor/dependent children only.

Veterans: Contact your local Veteran Service Officer (for Tillamook: Nick Torres 503-842-4358) and inquire about any monetary benefits for the veteran or widow of a veteran. Two free death certificates will be sent directly to the local Veteran Service Office and another to the National Veteran Administration if benefits apply. Widows of a veteran that own property should go to the Tax Assessors Office in the county of the property and apply for Property Tax Relief. The county will explain the process and will need to see the short-form death certificate but will return it to you. There are several other veteran benefits but this is for death certificate information only.

Banks: Joint accounts do not freeze; you may continue doing business as usual. Banks suggest that you don't buy new checks or remove the decedent's names from account(s) for 6 months as there could be refunds or reimbursement checks coming back in the deceased's name. When you do go to make changes on the account, the bank will likely ask you for a short-form death certificate. Banks will usually return the death certificate unless there are investment accounts (such as IRA's, Money Market Accounts and/ or Mutual Funds) that they will need the certificate for.

Individual accounts do freeze and you will need to talk with someone at the bank to access that account. In some cases we can provide you with a working copy of the death certificate before it has been completed. There is no guarantee that a bank will accept it though.

Attorneys: Attorneys most likely will need a short-form death certificate for probate and estate planning if applicable.

Property Titles – Property either go through probate, or just have the decedent's name removed if another name co-exists. In the latter case, a short-form death certificate will need to be taken to the County Clerk's Office in the county where the property exists (for Tillamook, this office is in the Tillamook County Court House). They will file the short-form death certificate and the name will be removed. The County Clerk charges a fee for doing this, but they will return the death certificate.

DMV: You can contact the DMV and ask them how to correct titles and registrations on your vehicles. You should bring the short-form death certificate with you to show them; they will not keep it.

Utility Companies: You should contact any applicable utility companies (PUD, cable, phone, water, etc.) to make changes billing information if necessary. Usually, a death certificate is not necessary, but they may wish to see the short-form certificate.

Pension Companies: Most pensions require a long-form death certificate

Life Insurance: Most life insurance claims need a long-form death certificate.

Investment Firms: Most investment firms need a short-form death certificate.

Accountants: Most accountants will need to make their own photocopy of the short-form for final filing records.

Examples: PERS, FERS, IWA, Railroad Retirement, Teamster Union, etc.