

What is the difference between a "certified" and a "non-certified" copy of a death certificate?

A **CERTIFIED COPY** of a death certificate issued by our office will have a raised seal, will show the signature of the Registrar, and will be printed on security paper. A **certified** copy may be required to settle an estate or to claim insurance benefits.

State law restricts who may obtain a **certified** copy of a death certificate. A **certified** copy can only be issued to the following people:

- an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, sibling, or grandparent of the decedent)
- a person authorized in writing by one of the above. (The written authorization must accompany the request and the relationship of the authorizing party to the decedent must be clearly explained.), or
- a person who can demonstrate that the death certificate is required to protect a personal or property right.

If you meet one of the above criteria, you may receive a **certified** copy of the death certificate.

- For Pre-2003 death certificates, a **certified** copy will automatically include cause of death and disposition information.
- For 2003 and later death certificates, you must specify if you want a "Fact of Death" certificate (which does not include cause of death and disposition information) or if you require the "Extended Fact of Death" certificate (which includes cause of death and disposition information).

A **NON-CERTIFIED COPY** of a death certificate is available to anyone who applies. However, a **non-certified** copy will not be acceptable for legal purposes, such as claiming insurance benefits.

- For Pre-2003 death certificates, a **non-certified** copy of a death certificate will contain the same information as a certified copy.
- For 2003 and later death certificates, only persons named in the above list and direct descendants of the decedent may have access to information in the "Extended Fact of Death" certificate (which includes cause of death and disposition information).

What is Expedited Service?

The State Vital Records Office charges a fee (\$10.00) for expedited (fast) **certified** copy issuance. If you are purchasing a certified copy of a death certificate from the State Vital Records Office and you require expedited service, call (608) 266-1371 from 8:00-4:00 Monday-Friday (except holidays). The request must be made in person or by faxing a credit card authorization. Some Local Vital Records Offices may also provide this service. Check with the Local Vital Records Office where you are applying for the copy before requesting and paying for expedited service.