

Death Certificates

1144.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Health and Safety Code 102860 charges the Coroner with the responsibility of attesting a death certificate for any death where the attending physician, surgeon, or physician assistant is unable to provide a cause of death, the death occurs without medical attendance, suicide is suspected, the death occurs following an injury or accident, or when there is suspicion that the death was caused by the criminal act of another.

1144.2 CAUSE OF DEATH DETERMINED BY CORONER PATHOLOGIST

The Coroner Division shall create and sign a death certificate for any decedent who undergoes a postmortem examination by the Coroner pathologist.

- (a) Fetal deaths - A Certificate of Fetal Death is required when the fetus has advanced to or beyond the 20th week of gestation.

1144.2.1 FINALIZED DEATH CERTIFICATES

A finalized death certificate shall be created and attested for all cases where both cause and manner of death are known immediately following postmortem examination, and where release of the cause and manner of death will not negatively impact an ongoing criminal investigation.

1144.2.2 PENDING DEATH CERTIFICATES

Pending death certificates shall be created and attested following the autopsy when any of the following apply:

- (a) The cause of death is unknown and further lab studies are required
- (b) The manner of death is unknown and further investigation is required
- (c) When release of the cause of death would be detrimental to an ongoing criminal investigation, and a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction has requested that the cause of death not be released
- (d) Any case requiring presentation at the Sheriff-Coroner Review

1144.2.3 DEATH CERTIFICATE AMENDMENTS

An amendment to a pending death certificate created and attested by the Coroner shall be issued as soon as possible once the death investigation is complete, and both cause and manner of death have been determined.

1144.2.4 SIGN-OUT NO AUTOPSY DEATH CERTIFICATES

For policy regarding non-autopsy cases with death certificates co-signed by the Coroner, refer to Policy 1145.

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department

Orange County SD Policy Manual

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1144.3 DEATH CERTIFICATE CREATION

The Clerical Unit shall be responsible for the creation of any death certificate to be attested by the Coroner. Death certificates shall be created via the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) immediately following the postmortem examination. The Clerical Unit shall input all information necessary to prepare the certificate for signature, obtained from the CME database, and forward the certificate to the on-duty Coroner Watch Commander upon completion.

1144.4 DEATH CERTIFICATE ATTESTATION

Death certificates shall be attested by the on-duty Coroner Watch Commander via EDRS. In the absence of a Coroner Watch Commander, death certificates shall be attested by the Deputy-In-Charge (DIC).

1144.5 TRANSFER OF DEATH CERTIFICATES TO MORTUARY

The attested Coroner death certificate shall be electronically transferred to the chosen funeral establishment upon the release of remains.