



The following Pennsylvania Department of Health Q&A is for the Electronic Death Registration System and is for use by Coroners/Medical Examiners and their staff.

Scope: Bureau of Health Statistics and Registries

Purpose: To implement an Electronic Death Registration System used by funeral directors, local registrars, coroners, medical examiners, and physicians to file reports of death.

Background: EDRS is a web-based application that is being implemented across the Commonwealth to simplify the data collection process and enhance communication between funeral directors, local registrars, coroners/medical examiners and certifying health care providers as they work together to register deaths online.

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1. When should I use the Death Start/Edit New Case vs. the Death Locate Case?

The following circumstances will determine which to use for each case.

- a. Use the Death Start/Edit New Case search for:
 - Starting a brand new case; or
 - Cases started by a funeral home or medical facility if ownership has not been claimed by your facility yet
- b. Use the Death Locate Case search for:
 - Cases you have started/worked on; or
 - Cases that have been claimed/worked on by someone at your facility

2. What should I do if I cannot find a case started by a medical facility or a funeral home?

- a. If no one from your facility has opened or worked on this case electronically, use the Death Start/Edit New Case search.
- b. If someone from your facility has opened or worked on this case electronically, use the Death Locate Case search.

- c. If neither of the above two solutions works, contact the person/facility who started the case to confirm how the name, date of death and gender was entered. Then search again using that confirmed information.

An additional reference is [QRS-2000, Finding a Death Case Someone Else Started](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

3. The decedent's place of birth is Puerto Rico. How is this to be entered in EDRS?

All United States territories (such as Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa) are to be entered in EDRS as states.

Use the **House** icon to search and select the location. In the Country field, be sure to select United States.

4. How do I complete the Decedent's Birth Place if the decedent was born out of the country?

Use the steps below to complete the Decedent's Birth Place if the decedent was born out of the country:

- a. Click the **House** icon to pick countries from a list.
- b. In the City or Town field, enter the name if known. If not, enter *Unknown*.
- c. Leave the County and State fields blank.

Note: The United Kingdom should be entered in the Country field if the decedent is from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

5. The decedent resided in a township and I entered it correctly in EDRS. However, the death certificate shows the words "Township and TWP." For example, I entered York Township as the decedent's residence. However, the death certificate is printing this field as "York Township TWP." What should I do to fix this?

The Department of Health is working with the EDRS vendor to correct this. Please continue to use the House function to select the decedent's correct residence. Do not omit the word "township" from your entry if that is part of the correct residence.

6. How do I find the local registrar I need?

Use the steps below to find the local registrar you need.

- a. In the Disposition screen, click the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon next to the *Filing Registrar Office* field in the *Filing Registrar* section. (Note: this is not the *Registrar* field in the *Registrar* section).
- b. When the *Lookup Filing Registrar* dialog box opens, enter the last name of the local registrar followed by the wildcard symbol (%). (for example, Smith%)
- c. Click the **Search** button.
- d. A list of local registrars will appear fitting your search criteria. Click **select** on the line of the local registrar you need.
- e. The name of the local registrar will populate the *Filing Registrar Office* field.

An additional reference is [QRS-2049, Selecting a Local Registrar](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

7. How do I complete Type of Place of Death when using Other Specify?

If you select Other (specify) from the drop-down menu for the Type of place of death field, then you must complete the Other Specify field next to it. When the Other Specify field is completed for Type of place of death, the Facility Name field must be left blank. Enter the description of the place in the Other Specify field.

An additional reference is [QRS-2005, Entering Other as Place of Death](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

8. After I clicked the Validate Page button, the Validation Results listed a number of Error Messages and there are red X's and yellow circles beside some of the links in the Death Registration Menu. What should I do?

When the screen displays for each link that has a red X or yellow circle, the fields to be corrected or completed will be shaded red (for a hard edit) or yellow (for a soft edit). In addition, the Error Message will be listed below the screen. Use the steps below to correct or override the errors:

- a. Correct or complete the fields shaded in red. Click the **Validate Page** button to re-validate the case. The red X will not go away unless this is done.
- b. The fields shaded in yellow should be reviewed but may be left as is; however, if they are not changed they must be overridden. To override an error, select the **Override** checkbox in the row that lists the error under Error Message at the bottom of the screen. Then click the **Save Overrides** button to save and validate that information.
- c. Repeat steps a. or b. for each screen that has a red X or yellow circle beside the link in the Death Registration Menu.
- d. After all errors are either overridden or corrected in the medical section, the **Certify** link will appear for coroners/medical examiners at the end of the medical section in the Death Registration Menu.

Note: Any errors that have been overridden will still have a yellow circle beside the link in the Death Registration Menu. This will not impact the processing of the death case.

9. I overrode the error(s) but the Certify link still does not display. Where do I find it?

Use the steps below to display the **Certify** link:

- a. After selecting an **Override** checkbox, you must click the **Save Overrides** button to save that information.
- b. Click the **Validate Page** button to re-validate the case. (You may need to repeat this in other screens of the medical section.)
- c. When all validation errors in the medical section are corrected or overridden, the **Certify** link will display at the end of the medical section in the Death Registration Menu.

Note that the **Certify** link will only appear for coroners/medical examiners, not for office staff.

10. How do I decline a case referred from a medical facility in error?

Before a referral is declined, communication with the medical facility outside of EDRS is essential to ensure appropriate handling of the case. Then use the steps below to decline a referral:

- a. From the death case, click the **Transfer Case** link in the *Other Links* section of the Death Registration Menu.
- b. The Transfer Case screen displays. In the *Transfer Medical Ownership To* field, first click the **checkbox** to insert a checkmark. Then click the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon.
- c. When the dialog box appears, search for the medical facility name by entering all or part of the facility name followed by the wildcard symbol (%) in the *Facility Name* field (for example, Har% for Harrisburg Hospital). Click the **Search** button.
- d. Click the **select** link beside the name of the facility to whom the case is to be returned.
- e. The Transfer Case screen will display again. Review your selections and the auto-generated text in the *Message* field. You may enter additional message text, but it is not required.
- f. Click the **Save** button to return the case to the medical facility.

An additional reference is [QRS-2011, Declining a Referral](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

11. Someone in our facility accidentally dropped a case to paper when it was supposed to be fully electronic. How can we “undo” the drop to paper?

The drop to paper process cannot be reversed. Once a death case has been dropped to paper, no changes can be made to the case electronically. At this point, you have the following options:

- a. If the other facility has already started a new case for this decedent, you can abandon the dropped to paper case and complete their case.
- b. If the other facility has not started a case for the same decedent, you can abandon the dropped to paper case and start a new case.
- c. Request that the other facility complete their portion on paper by using the dropped to paper certificate.

If you choose option a. or b. above, an additional reference is [QRS-2017, Abandoning a Death Case](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

12. What should I do when I receive an error message that says “Verification failed. Invalid user.”?

There are three reasons this error message would be received:

- a. The coroner/medical examiner’s information does not match the login of the user trying to sign the case.
- b. The coroner/medical examiner’s information was entered manually instead of using the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon to select the coroner/medical examiner’s name.
- c. A different coroner/medical examiner’s name was originally selected.
- d. A different coroner accepted the referral.

To correctly enter the coroner/medical examiner's information, use the steps below:

- a. Click the **Eraser** icon at the top of the Medical Certifier section.
- b. Click the **OK** button to confirm.
- c. Click the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon and search for the coroner/medical examiner by last name.
- d. Select the coroner/medical examiner from the search results.
- e. Click the **Save** button or the **Validate Page** button to save this information.

13. I need to print a drop to paper certificate, but the link isn't working. How can I get it to work?

If there is an owner for both the personal and medical sections of the case, the **Drop to Paper** link is not available.

If there are not two owners for the case, then the **Drop to Paper** link is only available to a coroner/medical examiner's office after the coroner/medical examiner has validated and certified the case. The **Drop to Paper** link can only be used one time. When you complete the printing process, the **Drop to Paper** link will become disabled. If you need to print additional certificates after the **Drop to Paper** link is disabled, contact the EDRS hotline to re-enable the link.

14. The case has not been registered yet and I need to change some of the information. However, the system will not allow me to make changes. How do I ensure the corrected information gets input?

The answer to this question will depend on how the case is filed (drop to paper vs. fully electronic). It is helpful to check the status bar to see if the case is certified or dropped to paper.

- a. If you cannot make changes to an unregistered case that has *not been dropped to paper*, the case is locked because your section of the case has been electronically certified. If you need to make changes to a certified electronic case that has not been registered, you can uncertify it. That will allow you to edit your section of the case. When finished, you will need to electronically certify the case again. For instructions on how to uncertify the case, see [QRS-2046, Uncertifying a Death Case](#), in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.
- b. If you cannot make changes to an unregistered case that *has been dropped to paper*, you will need to wait until the case is registered. After that happens, you can submit an amendment to the case.

Do not abandon the case and start a new one.

An additional reference is [QRS-2024, Editing an Amendment Request](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

15. After dropping a case to paper, we realized there was an error (or we need to finalize the pending cause of death). Now we cannot change anything in the electronic case. How can we correct this?

After the case is registered, you can submit an amendment to correct the error.

Additional references are [QRS-2021-CME, Amending a Death Case: Replacement Medical \(Pending to](#)

[Final](#)) and [QRS-2022-MC, Amending a Death Case: Medical](#). These are found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

16. I need to enter the final cause of death but I'm not seeing the Amendment link. Where is it?

The **Amendment** link only displays when the case has been fully entered and registered. Continue to monitor the case in EDRS and when it is fully registered, you can submit the amendment electronically.

If you originally filed the case on paper, but the funeral director completed the case using the hybrid (fax attestation) process, the case will appear in EDRS. However, since your portion of the case was done on paper, the final cause of death should be filed on paper as well.

If you need additional information on how to file an amendment, please see [QRS-2021-CME, Amending a Death Case: Replacement Medical \(Pending to Final\)](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

17. How do I update/correct a case in EDRS that was filed on paper?

Corrections should be made using the same method that was used to file the case originally. If you filed the case on paper, the correction must be submitted on paper. Only cases originally filed in EDRS can be corrected in EDRS.

18. How do I ensure that an amendment is processed and completed?

Use the steps below to check the status of an amendment:

- a. Click the **Amendment List** link in the Death Registration Menu (left side of your screen in the death case).
- b. The Amendment List dialog box will appear. Look at the Amendment Status column.
 - If the status is *Keyed*, the amendment was not saved or processed. For an Amendment Status of *Keyed*, click on the number in the Amendment Id column. The Amendment Page screen will display. Verify the changes and click the **Save** button. This should change the Amendment Status to *Amendment Pending Approval*.
 - If the status is *Amendment Pending Approval*, the amendment is with the Division of Vital Records for review and approval. You can expect a turnaround time of one business day for the amendment to be approved.

Note: If an amendment has not been approved within one business day, please check the Comments in the case to see if there is an issue with the amendment.

19. How do I abandon a case?

Use the steps below to abandon a case:

- a. In the Other Links section of the Death Registration Menu (left side of your screen in the death case), click the **Assign Status** link.
- b. Click the **New Special Status** button in the Assign Special Status dialog box.
- c. Select *Abandoned* from the Status drop-down menu.

- d. Enter the reason for abandoning the case in the Reason field. An example of a valid reason for abandoning a case could be that a duplicate case was created in error.
- e. Click the **Save** link in the Assign Special Status dialog box.
- f. Click the **Close** button in the Assign Special Status dialog box.

Note that an abandoned case will still be seen but is not active. An additional reference is [QRS-2017, Abandoning a Death Case](#). It is found in the Coroner/Medical Examiner User Guide.

20. In attempting to search in any field using the Lookup (magnifying glass) icon, I cannot find what I am looking for. How should I use the wildcard (%) symbol to help?

To maximize the results from a search, use three consecutive letters from the name of the entity for which you are searching. Place the wildcard (%) symbol before and after those three letters. Note that it is not case sensitive.

For example, if you are searching for the facility d St. Joseph Medical Center. List any three consecutive letters in the facility name preceded and followed by the wildcard (%) symbol. In this example, entering “jos” would bring up that facility name along with any others than contain those three consecutive letters.

21. How do I enter a fetal death in EDRS?

There has been no change to the method of filing reports of fetal deaths. They are still completed on paper and not entered in EDRS.

Contact: Phone: Vital Events Stakeholder Hotline: 800-323-9613

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