



The following Pennsylvania Department of Health Q&A is for the Electronic Death Registration System and is for use by Funeral Directors 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 medical facility or coroner/medical examiner 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 coroner/medical examiner?

Use the steps below to find a case started by a medical facility or a coroner/medical examiner.

- 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 Funeral Home User Guide.

3. I was presented with more than one form of identification for a decedent, and there are conflicting names. Which name should I put on the death case?

If one of the forms of identification is a social security card, use that name. If not, use the name from the most recently issued form of government-issued identification.

Additional name(s) can be listed as Aliases in EDRS. Be sure to enter the decedent's first and last name(s) under Aliases.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The decedent passed in Philadelphia County and the disposition type is cremation. How do I enter this since authorization for cremations is not required for deaths occurring in Philadelphia?

For cremations in Philadelphia County only, on the Disposition screen do the following:

- a. Select *Yes* for the answer to the question "Did Medical Examiner/Coroner approve Disposition?"
- b. For "Disposition Authorized By" do not use the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon. Instead, enter *Philadelphia* in the first name field and *N/A* in the last name field.

For all other counties outside of Philadelphia, the medical examiner/coroner name must be entered if the method of disposition is cremation.

8. The method of disposition is *Donation*. How do I enter the Place of Disposition?

On the Disposition screen, after selecting *Donation* as the method of disposition, enter information in the remaining fields as follows:

- a. Date of Disposition – enter the date the decedent’s remains will be donated.
- b. Did Medical Examiner/Coroner approve Disposition? –select *Yes*.
- c. Disposition Authorized By – for deaths occurring in all counties except Philadelphia, enter the name of the coroner/medical examiner who approved the donation. For deaths occurring in Philadelphia county, enter *Philadelphia* in the first name field and *N/A* in the last name field.
- d. Place of Disposition – do not use the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon. Instead, type the name of the organization to whom the decedent’s remains are being donated.
- e. City or Town – enter the name of the city or town in which the organization is located.
- f. State – enter the name of the state in which the organization is located.
- g. Country – this will auto-populate with United States.

9. There will be more than one method/place of disposition for a decedent. How should I enter multiple methods of disposition and places of disposition? In this case, the body will be cremated and then buried.

When there are multiple methods of disposition, **always report the method of disposition that will occur first**. If the body will be cremated and then buried, enter *Cremation* as the method of disposition along with the date that will occur. Then for place of disposition, use the magnifying glass icon to select the facility name handling the cremation. Some other possible scenarios are as follows:

FIRST Method/Place of Disposition	SECOND Method/Place of Disposition	Method/Place of Disposition TO BE ENTERED IN EDRS
Cremation	Removal from State	Cremation
Cremation	Other	Cremation
Removal from State	Burial	Removal from State
Removal from State	Cremation	Removal from State
Removal from State	Donation	Removal from State
Removal from State	Other	Removal from State
Donation	Burial	Donation
Donation	Cremation	Donation
Donation	Removal from State	Donation
Donation	Other	Donation

10. 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 Funeral Home User Guide.

11. When can I print a disposition permit from DAVE™?

For drop to paper cases, the disposition permit can be printed by the funeral home after the case is signed and dropped to paper. For fully electronic cases, the disposition permit can be printed by the funeral home after the case is affirmed and registered by the local registrar.

An additional reference is [QRS-2055, Printing a Disposition Permit](#). It is found in the Funeral Home User Guide.

12. We attempted to verify the decedent's social security number (SSN) and it shows Pending and not Passed or Failed. What should we do?

While the SSN is processing, the status will show Pending. It will remain Pending until the screen is refreshed by clicking **Next** or **Validate Page**.

13. The social security number (SSN) verification shows one of the following messages: FAILSSN, FAILGENDER, FAILDOB, FAILDOBGENDER, or FAILNAME. What does this mean, and what should I do?

Below is a description of each of these messages. If you receive any of these messages, confirm with information in question with the informant and try again. Five attempts are permitted.

- a. **FAILSSN** – The SSN for this decedent did not pass verification with SSA. The SSN provided is not an established number and has never been issued by SSA.
- b. **FAILGENDER** – The decedent's SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the gender provided did not match the Social Security Administration's records.
- c. **FAILDOB** – The decedent's SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the date of birth provided did not match the Social Security Administration's records.

- d. FAILDOBGENDEr – The decedent’s SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the gender and date of birth provided did not match the Social Security Administration’s records.
- e. FAILNAME – The decedent’s SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the name provided does not match the Social Security Administration’s records. This SSN may also belong to another individual. It is recommended that you re-check the decedent’s name and SSN before re-submitting your request.

If, after confirming and re-entering the information, you still do not receive a PASSED message, follow the manual process of filing the SSA-721 form.

14. The social security number (SSN) verification shows a PASSED message. Is there anything else I need to do for this?

When the SSN displays a status of PASSED for the verification, the EDRS system will automatically extract the decedent’s SSN information, as needed, and the funeral home will not need to submit page 1 of the SSA-721 form. However, you must still give pages 2 and 3 of the SSA-721 form to the informant.

15. There is a red X beside the Cause of Death link in the medical section of the Death Registration Menu. How do I override the error so the red X goes away?

A funeral director cannot make changes to information in the medical section. For a funeral director to sign the death case, he/she only needs to correct or override errors in the personal section (see question #__ for details on accomplishing that). A funeral director should proceed with signing the case if a red X is in the medical section.

16. 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 personal section, the **Sign** link will appear for funeral directors at the end of the personal 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.

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

Use the steps below to display the **Sign** 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 personal section.)
- c. When all validation errors in the personal section are corrected or overridden, the **Sign** link will display at the end of the personal section in the Death Registration Menu.

Note that the **Sign** link will only appear for funeral directors, not for office staff.

18. 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 Funeral Home User Guide.

19. The date of death needs corrected. How do I correct the wrong date of death?

The date of death is entered when the case is initially started. This cannot be changed by a funeral home in EDRS once entered (since it is in the medical section). If this is a fax attestation case, a signed statement from the medical certifier is needed unless there is a paper document to demonstrate that the information was recorded into EDRS in error. Follow the appropriate action below based on what type of case it is:

Type of Case	Action Required
Fully electronic	Ask the medical certifier to correct the error in EDRS.
Fax attestation (if the date of death is correct on the originating paper document)	If the Medical Certification Worksheet (or the paper death certificate form) shows the correct date, contact the EDRS hotline to make this correction.
Fax attestation (if the date of death is incorrect on the originating paper document)	Provide a signed statement from the medical certifier (on his/her letterhead) who signed the Medical Certification Worksheet (or the paper death certificate form). The statement must include the correct date of death. Send the statement via fax to 724-656-3272 or via email to RA-DHDeathReg@pa.gov .

20. 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 funeral director’s information does not match the login of the user trying to sign the case.
- b. The funeral director’s information was entered manually instead of using the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon to select the funeral director’s name.
- c. A different funeral director’s name was originally selected.

To correctly enter the funeral director’s information, use the steps below:

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

21. I am receiving an Invalid User Error when attempting to sign the case. How can I resolve this error?

Try the following troubleshooting steps:

- a. If another funeral director at your facility is listed on the Disposition screen, you will need to change it to your name before you can sign the case.
- b. If someone else entered your name in freeform text without using the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon or the License Number auto populate arrow to select you as the funeral director, DAVE™ will not recognize you as the user.

If you checked the above and the error is still unresolved, contact the EDRS hotline to determine if there is an issue with account creation.

22. 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 funeral homes after the funeral director has validated and signed 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.

23. 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 signed. If you need to make changes to a signed electronic case that has not been registered, you can unsign it. That will allow you to edit your section of the case. When finished, you will need to electronically sign the case again. For instructions on how to unsign the case, see [QRS-2051, Unsigning a Death Case](#). It is found in the Funeral Home 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 Funeral Home User Guide.

24. After dropping a case to paper, we realized there was an error. Now we cannot change anything in the electronic case. How can we correct this error?

After the case is registered, you can submit an amendment to correct the error. Be sure the amendment is complete and approved before going to the local registrar for copies of the death certificate.

An additional reference is [QRS-2022-FH, Amending a Death Case: Personal](#). It is found in the Funeral Home User Guide.

25. How do I update/correct a case 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.

26. 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.

27. How do I abandon a case?

Use the steps below to abandon a case:

- h. In the Other Links section of the Death Registration Menu (left side of your screen in the death case), click the **Assign Status** link.
- i. Click the **New Special Status** button in the Assign Special Status dialog box.
- j. Select *Abandoned* from the Status drop-down menu.
- k. 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.
- l. Click the **Save** link in the Assign Special Status dialog box.
- m. 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 Funeral Home User Guide.

28. How do I relinquish a case so that another funeral home can assume ownership?

Use the steps below to relinquish a case:

- a. In the Other Links section of the Death Registration Menu (left side of your screen in the death case), click on the **Relinquish Case** link.
- b. Click the **OK** button in the Relinquish Case dialog box.

Once another facility claims ownership of the case, you will no longer be able to access it. An additional reference is [QRS-2047, Relinquishing a Case](#). It can be found in the Funeral Home User Guide.

29. How do I transfer a case to another funeral home campus?

Use the steps below to transfer the case to another funeral home campus:

- a. In the Other Links section of the Death Registration Menu (left side of your screen in the death case), click on the **Transfer Case** link.
- b. When the Transfer Case screen displays, click the checkbox for “Transfer Personal Ownership To” and then click the **Lookup** (magnifying glass) icon to select the name of the campus where the case is being transferred.
- c. When the Transfer Case screen displays again, review your selections and the auto-generated text in the Message field. You may enter additional message text but it is not required.
- d. Click the **Save** button.

An additional reference is [QRS-2033-FH, Transferring a Death Case from a Funeral Home to Another Campus](#). It is found in the Funeral Home User Guide.

30. 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 name Charles Brown, list any three consecutive letters in that name preceded and followed by the wildcard (%) symbol. In this example, entering `%cha%` would bring up that name along with any others that contain those three consecutive letters.

Another example would be searching for the name of a facility called 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.

31. 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.

32. What is the turnaround time for medical entry of a fax attestation case sent via fax or email?

You can expect a turnaround time of two business days to process your request. Please do not refax, for this creates duplicate work.

Please verify that all information is complete and legible. If the Medical Certification Worksheet is rejected for missing or additional information needed, please allow two business days for processing after you resubmit it with the new information. All incoming Medical Certification Worksheets enter the same work queue.

33. What must I do when filing a late case?

If a funeral home must file a case late they should put a note in the Comments section of the case. The note should include the reason why the case is being filed late. Comments are found in the Other Links section of the Death Registration Menu (left side of your screen in the death case).

34. I want to pick up a decedent's death certificate from the local registrar, but he/she isn't receiving a message in EDRS about the case. What can be done?

Note that only fully electronic cases will generate a message to the local registrar. If the case is fully electronic, check the status bar to ensure it indicates that you have signed and the certifier has certified. The local registrar will only receive an unregistered case when the case status includes the words *Signed* and *Certified*. When a case is with the local registrar, the status bar will include the words *Local Affirmation Required*. When those words appear, it means the local registrar office displayed on the Disposition screen will get the message.

The local registrar can find any case that displays his/her office on the Disposition screen (assuming it has been signed and certified) by using the **Death Start/Edit Case** link on the Home page. An additional reference is [QRS-2000, Finding a Death Case Someone Else Started](#). It is found in the Funeral Home User Guide.

35. Can I still obtain free veterans' certificates if I use EDRS?

Yes, whether the case is filed on paper or through EDRS, the fee may be waived for death certificates if the decedent was a member of the armed forces.

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

Email: RA-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov