Pennsylvania
Department of Health

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
VITAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

FAQ – EVITALS DEATH

Date: 12/6/2024
Version: 001

Frequently Asked Questions

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General Questions

1. What is the eVitals website to record Pennsylvania deaths?
   - www.evitals.health.pa.gov

2. Is there a browser that works best for running eVitals?
   - eVitals works best with Google Chrome.

3. How do I sign up for eVitals?
   - eVitals sign up information can be found here - https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/health/healthcare-and-public-health-professionals/evitals/evitals-sign-up.html

4. Can my Facility Admin create my account for me?
   - No. Everyone must submit for their own account online. The Facility Admin will approve your access once your profile request is submitted.

5. My account is pending. What should I do?
   - If you are the Primary Facility Admin, then you should contact us at RA-DHeVitalsFAhelp@pa.gov.
   - If you are a Deputy Facility Admin or a user, then you should contact your Primary Facility Admin to approve you and set your role for that facility.

6. I'm a state employee. Do I need a business partner login or can I use my current Commonwealth of PA(CWOPA/Keystone) login?
   - You can use your current CWOPA/Keystone login.
   - Steps to connect your Commonwealth of PA(CWOPA/Keystone) login.
     1. Email RA-DHEVITALSHELP@pa.gov provide your Commonwealth of PA(CWOPA/Keystone) state you are a Commonwealth Employee that works externally and needs access eVitals. The Business Workflow team will assign permissions to access eVitals to your account and notify you.
     2. Once you are notified you will access www.evitals.health.pa.gov and login with your CWOPA ID and password. The first time you login you will need to perform a profile access request to the facility(s) you need access to. Refer to Step 5 at https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/health/healthcare-and-public-health-professionals/evitals/all-users.html

7. How can I tell what role I'm assigned for each of my facilities?
   - Click the gear icon on the top right corner of the screen and scroll down.

8. Who should I contact if my facility name or address needs to be updated?
   - Email us at RA-DHeVitalsFAhelp@pa.gov.

9. I don't have a Life Events tab under my Navigation Menu (3 lines). What should I do?
   - You need to contact your Facility or Deputy Facility Admin. They need to update your role on your profile.

10. Death certificates are showing the wrong title/license for me. How can I update it?
    - Contact your Facility or Deputy Administrator to update any information related to your eVitals profile. (License numbers, phone name change etc..)

11. How do I add another facility to my account?
    - Perform the following Steps.
      1. Click Navigation Menu (3 lines).

2. Click Main.
3. Click New Facility Request.
4. Click Look Up.
5. Search for and select the facility you want to add.
6. Select your Job Title.
7. Select your Required Role.
8. Enter your PA license number if you have one.
9. Click Add Facility.
10. Click Save.

12. Where can I find the User Guides?

- User Guides can be found by selecting the question mark in the upper right corner of the eVitals screen.
- User guides available to you will be based on the roles you have.

13. How does a fully electronic case process through the system?

- There are 4 basic steps. The first 2 are interchangeable. Either side can go first. But the case doesn't go to step 3 until the first 2 steps are done.
  1. ½ - Personal section filled in and affirmed (Signed) by a funeral director or coroner/ME.
  2. ½ - Medical section filled in and affirmed (Certified) by a medical professional or coroner/ME.
  3. 3 - Case reviewed and affirmed by Local or State Registrar.
  4. 4 - Case reviewed and approved by Death Registry Unit.

14. How can I get help with a death case?

- Call us at 1-800-323-9613 and follow the prompts to get to the right section for your issue.
- Email us at RA-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov.

15. What's the easiest way to know the status of a case?

- Review the Status Bar at the top of the case. It will always tell you section and overall case status.
- You can also review the Case Status History to see when the case encountered the status.

16. What are Queues in eVitals?

- Purpose of queues is to assist in managing workflow.
- Each Queue is a list of cases that have a status corresponding to the queue name. For example, a case that has the Personal Pending status would be in the Personal Pending queue.

17. What are Preferred Queues and how do I set them?

- Preferred queues are the 7 queues you select to see as soon as you login.
  1. Click the Navigation Menu (3 lines).
  2. Click Main.
  3. Click Preferred Queues.
  4. Select a Functional Entity. Preferred Queues are facility specific. You will have to set them for each facility.
  5. Highlight the 7 queues on the Available Queues list that you want to see on the home page.
  6. Click the right arrow to move the 7 highlighted queues to the Selected Queues list.
  7. Click Save.

18. What is the difference between the Locate Case page and Start New Case page?

- Locate Case is to search for cases your facility already owns.
- Start New Case is to start a new case or to search for cases started by another facility so you can claim them.

19. How can I find and claim a case that another facility started?

- You must act like you are starting a new case and the system will force you to their case. Click Start New Case and enter first name, last name, sex, and date of death. Click search and the system will show you an exact duplicate. Click Preview and click Claim Case.
- Note a case will not be located and duplicate creation may happen in following scenarios
  1. *Example: You are a Medical Certifier signed in under your physician's office and a Nursing Home started a case for the same decedent. Since both are medical facilities, it will not find the decedent when starting a new case. The Nursing home should do a Request for Medical Certification to the physician office/medical certifier.*
  2. *You are a Funeral Home and entered a case under the incorrect Funeral Home or another Funeral Home started the case. You will not see the duplicate when starting a new case. You would need to perform a Transfer from the incorrect FH to the correct one..*

20. When I claim a case am I the sole owner?

- No. Every case has 2 co-owners. 1 funeral home or coroner/ME office that owns the personal section and 1 medical facility or coroner/ME office that owns the medical section.

21. I'm in a death case, how can I search for another case?

- Clicking Return To Results will take you back to the search results page. If you click the +, then you can search for another case.

22. Is there a way to see all the cases within my facility?

- Yes. Search for % in the case ID field on the Locate Case page.

23. What 's the difference between Comments and Case Messages?

- Comments are used to leave notes on the case. There is no notification for Comments.
- Case Messages are used to communicate with users within your facility, within the facility that owns the other side of the case, or within the Death Registry Unit. A notification will appear on the dashboard of the users selected to receive the case message.

24. How do I send a Case Message?

- Perform the following steps:
  1. Click Case Messages.
  2. Click New Message.
  3. Select Functional Entity as the Recipient Type.
  4. Select the facility you want as the Functional Entity. The only options will be the case co-owners and the Death Registry Unit.
  5. Select the Role of the person you want to send a message to.
  6. Select the User.
  7. Click Add Selected.
  8. Enter the case ID and decedent's name in the Subject line.
  9. Enter your message.
  10. Click Send.

25. How will I know if something is wrong with my death case after I affirm my section?

- For fully electronic cases, both registrar and Death Registry Unit rejections have case messages and a status associated with them. Please review your Rejection queues to see cases. It's best to have them as part of your preferred queues.
- You can see the reason for the rejection in the comment column of the Case Status History page.
- For hybrid cases, the Death Registry unit assigns the Medical Certification Issue-Information Queried status to the case.

26. I filled in a page but there are still errors at the bottom saying everything is blank. What should I do?

- You should click Save and then see what errors are still there. Validation errors appear on every page from the first time someone clicks Save because all the other pages are blank. Ignore the errors until you fill in the page and click Save. The errors about blanks will all go away after you fill in each page and save it.

27. Can I enter a PO Box for an address?

- No. All addresses must have the physical address. But you can enter the PO box as part of the physical address. You can include it in the apt/suite field or as part of the street field (eg. 123 Walnut Street PO Box 4567).

28. I do not want to use the address the system changes to after verifying. Do I have to select it?

- No. You can enter an address exactly the way you want it, click Verify, click Cancel, and click Save.

29. My files aren't uploading. What is the problem?

- There are 3 things that affect uploads - file size, your internet speed, and firewall/security blockers.
  1. The file needs to be less than 1,000 KB (1 MB). Please scan files at no higher than 200-300 DPI.
  2. Ensure your internet speed is above 10Mbps. You can check your speed at this link - https://www.speedtest.net/
  3. Ensure your security settings are not blocking file uploads. Depending on the size of your organization you may need to contact your IT department.

30. There are 2 cases for the same decedent. What should I do?

- Perform a Request to Abandon. This will assign the case to your Facility/Deputy Facility Administrators queue or other assigned "Assistant Admin" to complete and approve the abandoning of the case. The case is not fully abandoned until the Admin Assigns the Abandoned Status.
- If you have immediate contact to your to Facility Admin or Deputy Facility Admin you can ask them to assign the Abandoned status to the case you are not going to use.

31. How can I change a case after it's registered?

- Amendments are post-registration changes. Amendment requests must come to the Death Registry Unit the same way the original signature came.
- If the original signature was done on paper, then the Signor (personal section) and Certifier (medical section) will submit a paper amendment form.
- If the original signature was done online, then the Signor (personal section) and Certifier (medical section) will submit an online amendment request by:
  1. Click Amendment History.
  2. Click Create Amendment.
  3. Select the Type.
  4. Click Save Amendment.
  5. Make your changes.
  6. Click Save on any page you change.
  7. Click Amendment Summary.
  8. Review Delta Report and ensure requested changes are correct.
  9. Click Amendment Affirmation.
  10. Click Affirm box.
  11. Click Affirm button.

32. I am unable to Affirm my amendment. What is wrong?

- Did someone else enter the amendment for you and you are just trying to affirm and submit the amendment? If so, you must select Edit on the Amendment and then affirm.

- Are you the Signor (personal section) or Certifier (medical section) of the case? If not this may be the issue. Depending on your role and type of organization you may be able to override this and supply a reason. (ex. Signor or certifier on case is no longer available)

Funeral Home Questions

1. What roles should be assigned to funeral home staff who work on death cases?
   - Individuals should have ONE of the following roles:
     1. FH Data Entry is for non-licensed staff.
     2. FH Director is for licensed funeral directors.

2. What's the difference between a hybrid case and a fully electronic case?
   - A fully electronic case is when the Personal and Medical sections are both done online.
   - A hybrid case is when only one side (Personal) is done online, and the other side (Medical) is done on paper.

3. Does it matter what order I complete the steps in for a hybrid case?
   - Yes. Please complete hybrid cases in order - fill in the personal section, sign the case, and upload the paper. Then the system will auto-drop to paper and assign the correct status.

4. I already signed my hybrid case and attached the paper when the family brought me new information. The case isn't registered yet. Can I update the case?
   - Yes. Click EDIT Drop to Paper. Then you can unaffirm, make your changes, and re-affirm.

5. Is it okay to click Drop to Paper on fully electronic cases?
   - NO. A funeral home user clicking Drop to Paper will remove medical ownership of the case from the medical facility and lock out all medical users. You will have to Cancel Drop to Paper for them to reclaim and redo the medical section.

6. Can I upload a paper death certificate form as the Medical Certification Worksheet Type?
   - Yes. Please upload whichever paper the certifier fills out as a Medical Certification Worksheet.

7. I'm unable to upload a paper medical certification. What should I do?
   - You can email it to RA-DHEDRSFAX@pa.gov or fax it to 717-525-5190.

8. What are the None and Unknown options for on the SSN available field?
   - None is for foreigners who do not have SSNs.
   - Unknown is for Americans whose SSN is not known at the time the death record is filed.

9. What should I enter for an unknown zip code when the city/town is not known.
   - Enter 99999 for zip code.

10. How can I enter the decedent's township for an out-of-state resident address?
    - You can't. The system only records municipality-level details for PA addresses.

11. Who should I contact to get a non-participating Place of Death facility added to the system?
    - Email us at RA-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov and we will add it to the system.

12. Who do I contact to have a cemetery or PA municipality added to the system?
    - Email the details to us at RA-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov.

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13. I'm a funeral home Data Entry user. Why can't I affirm an amendment?

- That's how the system works. Only funeral directors can affirm (submit) amendments. Data Entry Users can create amendments and save amendments, but only funeral directors can affirm them. If a data entry user creates an amendment, then the funeral director must click Edit Amendment before the system will let them affirm it.

14. How do I place an order for certified copies?

- *(Ensure you complete All steps and Submit the order. If you forget to Submit the order will not be available by the Division Vital Records or your LR for processing)*
  1. Open a registered case.
  2. Click Order Certified Copies under Other Links.
  3. Click Create Order.
  4. Select the Delivery Method.
  5. Select the type of DCs you want (with or without medical info) as the Service.
  6. Enter the Quantity you want.
  7. Click Add.
  8. Click + Payment.
  9. Select Payment Method. The options here are based on the delivery method you selected.
  10. Click Add Payment.
  11. Enter the dollar amount in the Amount field.
  12. Click Save.
  13. Click Back to Order.
  14. **Click Submit Order.**

15. How do I place an order for Veteran DCs?

1. Click Order Certified Copies under Other Links.
2. Click Create Order.
3. Select Mail or the Public Office you want to pick up from as the Delivery Method. You can't get Veteran DCs from a Local Registrar.
4. Select the type of DCs you want (with or without medical info) as the Service.
5. Enter the Quantity you want.
6. Click Add.
7. Click + Payment.
8. Select Waive as the Payment Method.
9. Click Add Payment.
10. Enter the total dollar amount to be waived in the Amount field.
11. Select Veteran Certificate as the Reason.
12. Click Save.
13. Click Back to Order.
14. Click Submit Order.
15. The order is submitted. Now you must attach the discharge papers.
    a. Click Documentary Evidence.
    b. Click Add Documentary Evidence.
    c. Select Veteran Fee Waiver as the Document Type.
    d. Click Browse and Upload.
    e. Select the file from your computer.
    f. Click Open. The file will upload.
    g. Click Save.

16. I placed an order and the status says "Order Validation Failed." Is that okay?

- Yes. It is okay. The status will say Order Validation Failed until the filing registrar validates the order. That's how the system works.

17. Can Facility Admins order Death Certificates?

- No. Only the funeral directors from the organization can perform the final submission of the order.

18. How can I check the status of an order I already started?

- Click Order Certified Copies. That screen will show all orders with their statuses. You can see individual order details by clicking the Order Number.

19. How will I know when my order is ready for pick up at a public office?

- You will get an email notification when the order is ready for pick up. (Visible by all users)
- A dashboard notification will appear for all users.
- If you enter your Pending Submitted Order Queue it will list all orders and their state.
  - *Confirming all statuses. Information pending.*

20. How do I cancel an order?

- Orders can be cancelled by the Funeral Home prior to Submitting the order.
  1. Click Order Certified Copies.
  2. Click the Order Number.
  3. Click Cancel Order.
- If the order has already been submitted you must email ra-dhvrdeathcert@pa.gov to request the order to be cancelled. Include the Case number, order number, and organization contact as part of email. In Subject line put Cancel Order Needed: *Order number*

Local Registrar Questions

1. How can I get general Local Registrar support?
   - Email us at RA-DHDVRLRsupport@pa.gov.

2. Can a local registrar unaffirm a case after affirming it?
   - No. You cannot unaffirm a case.

3. Is there a way for me to undo a rejection?
   - No. The only way to resolve an LR-Medical Rejection is for the certifier to unaffirm the case and then reaffirm the case. The only way to resolve an LR-Personal Rejection is for the signor to unaffirm the case and then reaffirm the case.

4. Local File Date is missing from a case so I can't print. How can I add it?
   - Email us at RA-DHDeathReg@pa.gov and we will add it.

5. What should I do if a registered case has a special status preventing me from printing?
   - Email us at RA-DHDeathReg@pa.gov and we will remove the special status.

6. A Funeral Home states that an order has been submitted but I cannot find it in my queue. What should I do?
   - Confirm with the funeral home that they submitted their order after the payment has been applied.
   - Confirm with the funeral home that you are listed as the Local Registrar on the case.

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Medical Facility Questions

1. What medical roles should be assigned to users?
   - Individuals should have ONE of the following roles:
     1. External-Death MF User role is for non-licensed individuals.
     2. External-Death MF Pronouncer role is for licensed RNs.
        External-Death MF Certifier role is for licensed CRNPs and above, including residents.

2. What parts of the death record is a nurse responsible for filling in?
   - There is no policy for who fills in what fields in the medical section. All required fields must be filled in by someone and then the section gets affirmed (certified) by the certifier. Please ask your facility what fields they want you to fill in.

3. Does PA require a Pronouncer be listed on the death record?
   - No. You do not have to enter Pronouncer info. The only required lines on the Pronouncement page are Date and Time of Death with their Modifiers. However, if you enter a Date Pronounced Dead, then you must enter Pronouncer info AND that person must digitally affirm the info.

4. Can I fill in the Pronouncer info for someone who doesn't have an account?
   - No. You can only fill in those fields with the user lookup AND the individual must digitally affirm the info.

5. I get an error message that says "Pronouncer is not the same as the logged in user" when trying to pronounce my case. What should I do?
   - The person logged in is not listed as the pronouncer. There are 2 different ways to correct this:
     1. Click Clear, click Look up Pronouncer search for and select your b- login, click Save.
     2. Remove Date Pronounced Dead and then re-enter it. The system will fill in the Pronouncer fields with your information.

6. I get an error message that says "Certifier is not the same as the logged in user" when I try to certify my case. What should I do?
   - Go to the Certifier page, ensure your Certifier Type is correct, click Clear, click Look up Certifier, search for and select your b- login, click Save. Now try to certify.

7. I'm the certifier. I haven't certified yet, but I can't edit any pages. How come?
   - Go to the Certifier page, ensure your Certifier Type is correct, click Clear, search for and select your b- login, click Save. Now you should be able to make changes to any page.

8. How come I'm unable to Request Medical Certification from a certifier within my facility?
   - That's how the system works. The Medical Certification Request function will only send to people in other medical facilities. Within the same facility, you'll send the certifier a Case Message.

9. Why am I unable to refer my case to the coroner or ME office?
   - Manner of Death must be blank for someone to refer a case to a ME/coroner.

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10. How come I can't enter the decedent's residence for the place of death?

- Only primary care certifiers (Physician Office set up) and outpatient hospice certifiers can enter Decedents Residence. Hospital certifiers can only enter their hospital. Nursing home certifiers can only enter their nursing home.
- This is dependent on how your facility is set up. If you feel your facility should be set up as a physicians office (primary care) or an outpatient hospice please email RA-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov.

Coroner / Medical Examiner Facility Questions

1. What role should be assigned to staff who work on death cases?
   - Individuals should have ONE of the following roles:
     1. ME Data Entry is for Users that will only enter data into the system.
     2. Coroner is for Coroners to allow for data entry, case certification and amendment affirmation.
     3. ME Certifier is for Medical Examiners to allow for data entry, case certification and amendment affirmation, but requires a medical license to be entered on the profile.

2. How do I accept a case that was referred to my office?
     1. Go to the ME Referral Review Death queue.
     2. Click on the Case ID.
     3. Click Accept (bottom left corner).

3. When should I check Yes for the ME/Coroner Disposition question on the Decedent page?
   - You should only check Yes for that question if your office is handling disposition. If there is a funeral home involved, then select No for that question. Selecting Yes will prevent all funeral home users from accessing the case.

4. How do I enter an unknown Time of Death?
   - Select unknown as the Modifier and enter 99:99 as the time.

5. What should I enter as the Year for an unknown Date of Injury?
   - Enter 9999 as the Year.

6. What should I enter for an unknown zip code when the city/town is not known.
   - Enter 99999 as the zip code.

7. What's the difference between a Medical Amendment and a Pending to Final Amendment?
   - A Medical Amendment is to amend a death record that didn't have a pending cause or manner of death.
   - A Pending to Final Amendment is to amend a death record that was registered with a pending cause or manner of death.

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