

State of Vermont
Department of Health
Health Surveillance
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Agency of Human Services

Dear Vermont Funeral Director,

June 9, 2008

I'd like to let you know about two important changes to death reporting that will occur this year. ***Beginning with deaths occurring on July 1, 2008, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) will introduce a new death certificate*** which is based on the 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Death. At the same time, we will begin to roll out Vermont's Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). The EDRS is a secure web-based application with user verification and tracking, for reporting deaths and producing death certificates. The initial roll out, or "pilot" phase will begin with mostly internal VDH users, including the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and key town clerks. ***Most funeral directors and physicians will continue to use a paper process during this first phase.*** The Department of Health plans to make the system available to these users, in subsequent phases, beginning later in 2008. When the EDRS is fully implemented, it will bring improvements to the death reporting process, as well as result in more accurate and timely information about Vermont deaths and their causes.

Eventually, all deaths in Vermont (as well as in all other U.S. states and territories) will be fully reported on-line. In the meantime, we will continue to rely on a paper process for death reporting. This paper process will be especially important as we make the transition to electronic reporting. The transitional paper process for death reporting will be very close to the current process of death reporting with two exceptions.

For deaths occurring on July 1, 2008 and later, instead of using an actual death certificate for reporting, you will be using a new form known as the Preliminary Report of Death (PROD). It is NOT the same Preliminary Report of Hospital Death you may have used or seen at a hospital. The *Preliminary Report of Death* contains all of the fields that will appear on the legal death certificate. One side covers the demographic information of the decedent; the other side covers the cause of death information. Note: the original *Preliminary Report of Death* may be used for obtaining Burial Transit Permits.

For deaths occurring on July 1, 2008 and later, instead of delivering a completed death record to the Town Clerk for registering, you will need to fax the completed and signed Preliminary Report of Death directly to Vital Records for data entry and registration in the EDRS. Once the data entry is complete, the legal Death Certificate can be printed by Vital Records and by Town Clerks who are enrolled in the EDRS. Vital Records will mail certificates to those Town Clerks who are not yet enrolled.

Enclosed with this letter you will find a sample copy of the *Preliminary Report of Death* along with a sheet highlighting the new and revised items that appear on the *Report and Death Certificate* and some "tips" for completing the form. ***You may order Preliminary Reports of Death directly by calling Vital Records at 800-439-5008 or by faxing a request to 802-651-1787.*** This form will also be available online at <http://healthvermont.gov/hc/EDRS/index.aspx> beginning July 1, 2008.

It is our goal to provide support and guidance as you transition to the new death certificate and reporting process. If you have specific questions about the EDRS, or would like to discuss any of the changes in death reporting, please contact Dawn Anderson, EDRS Outreach/Training Coordinator, at EDRS@vdh.state.vt.us or 802-652-2070.

Sincerely,



Linda Davis,
Vital Statistics Program Supervisor

