



## Office of the State Registrar of Vital Statistics **Abandoned EDR Death Records** Question and Answer

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When a record is abandoned, a comment is entered in the system as to why. The state office reviews these comments to determine if there are records being abandoned that may not need to be. Below are example comments and resolutions that may assist.

### State Office Technical and System Use Assistance

303.692.2191 or [cdphe.edr@state.co.us](mailto:cdphe.edr@state.co.us)

### Terminology

**Drop-To-Paper Worksheet** = Process where the funeral home completes the demographic information on the record in the EDR system, then prints a copy of the drop to paper worksheet for the medical certifier to complete when the medical certifier is not using the EDR system.

**Original or hard copy or redline death certificate** = An original hard copy death certificate used for manual processing of death certificates. The document used prior to implementation of the EDR system.

### Sample Reasons to Truly Abandon

- Doctor refuses to sign drop-to-paper and funeral home then uses redline death certificate
- Started record under incorrect funeral home
- Family went to another funeral home (the record cannot be transferred)
- Upon saving, a pop-up message stating this is a “Duplicate Record” (meaning another user ~ hospital, coroner or funeral home ~ has started the record in EDR and yours may be a duplicate). If the duplication is confirmed, the duplicate record is abandoned.

### Examples Where Abandon May Not Be Necessary and Options

#### Social Security Number shows “failed” in SSA status field

When the SSN “fails” for any reason (name, date of birth, sex, SSN, etc.), the funeral home is not prevented from releasing the EDR death record or from dropping-to-paper. The SSN *does* need to be resolved, either by entering the correct number or using another option (pending, unavailable, etc.) prior to releasing record. If you believe all of the information is correct, you may register the EDR record and also fax the SSA-721 form to SSA, as you have in the past.

A “failed” SSN does not prevent the medical certifier from accessing, completing or signing the EDR death record.

SSN - If abandoning a record that has been medically certified, please be cognizant that the physician is being asked to complete/sign a death record that they have already signed. You may get questions from them.

#### Too many attempts on SSN

SSA does limit the number of attempts to match the SSN for each record. If you believe the information on the record is correct, see the above instructions.

If you now have another SSN to try, the first record would need to be abandoned and you may start a new record.

#### **Unable to enter SSN after entering “pending” or “unknown”**

This may be done by highlighting and deleting or back-spacing the information in the SSN Not Available field, press the Backspace key until the field is blank, then press the *Esc* key on your keyboard (upper left corner) and then Tab. This will enable both fields for entry.

#### **Demographic information incorrect**

The funeral home may make any demographic corrections prior to Releasing the record. If the EDR record has been Demographically Verified (PIN'd) by the funeral director, the funeral director may "De-verify" the record. This removes their signature and opens all demographic fields for editing.

Main Identifiers incorrect (Decedent first name, last name, suffix, SSN, place of death, date of death, date of birth). If the EDR record has been medically certified prior to correcting, and the corrections include main identifiers of the decedent, the system automatically "De-Certifies" the medical certification. This would then require the medical certifier to PIN the record again (all medical information was saved; only a PIN is necessary). If any one of the above fields were blank at the time of medical certification, the automatic decertification will not occur when the information is added.

County of Death is incorrect. Funeral home may correct the demographic information including the county of death. Once the county is corrected, the appropriate coroner may be designated.

#### **Changing place of disposition**

If record is still in Work Queue, change place of disposition (if PIN'd, will require user to "De-Verify" under Registration drop down). If record has been released, use correction form to change place of disposition. If disposition has not yet occurred and you need a new permit, the state office will issue one as part of the correction. Please be sure to indicate the need for a permit on the correction form.

#### **System won't allow entry of decedent's address**

Some fields in the address area are interconnected. If the fields are 'clicked' into out-of-order, the tables behind the data fields may not load properly. For example, once the state of Colorado is selected, Colorado counties are loaded for the county dropdown. If you try to select a county, without first entering the state, the dropdown does not know which counties to provide. Starting in the first field in the address, enter information and use the Tab key to move through the rest of the fields. If this does not solve the issue, please call the state office for assistance.

#### **Unable to designate coroner**

Typically, if funeral home is unable to designate a particular county coroner's office, check what county is listed under "Place of Death." The coroner in the county of death is the *only* coroner that the EDR system will allow to be designated. If a transfer of jurisdiction is needed, the coroner in the county of death will perform that option in the EDR system once they are designated. The funeral home is encouraged to add a comment with the requested transfer information. If there are other technical issues that do not allow the designation of a coroner, please contact the state office for assistance.

### **Need to transfer case to different coroner's office**

If the funeral home knows that there will be a transfer of jurisdiction of the death record, they must still designate the coroner in the county of death. The EDR system will not let them bypass this coroner. If the coroner in the county of death wants to transfer jurisdiction, they will complete that process once they are designated. The funeral home is encouraged to add a comment with the requested transfer information.

### **Physician/Coroner is not on EDR**

There is a report that you can run at anytime that lists all medical certifiers using the system. The list is updated daily as new users sign up. Go to the home screen (has the state seal) and the Reports menu, Master List of All Medical Certifiers. If the physician/coroner does not use the system, you may elect to use the EDR for a Drop to Paper registration or use the hard copy/redline method.

### **Physician/Coroner refusing to sign drop-to-paper due to "Not a Legal Copy" watermark**

An alternative writable PDF drop-to-paper document is available that does not have the watermark that says "Not a Legal copy." This document may be found on the Extranet under Forms at: <https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdphevitarecords411/forms>.

The funeral director may complete Section 1 with the Decedent information, and fax/deliver the form to the physician for completion. We are working to update the form within the EDR.

### **Physician/Coroner was designated but unable/unavailable to access EDR**

If physician/coroner is *unable* to sign due to inability to access the EDR system, they may call the state office for technical assistance.

If physician/coroner is *unavailable or refusing to sign*, funeral home may call the state office and have them decline on behalf of medical certifier. The record will then be available to drop-to-paper or to designate a new medical certifier.

### **Wrong physician was designated**

The physician may either "Decline" the record or "Re-Designate" to the appropriate physician. If the physician can't or won't perform the decline, contact the state vital records office and they will decline on behalf of physician, which makes the record available to the funeral home.

### **Medical Certifier has signed record, but wants to change/add information**

The Medical Certifier may correct the information in the EDR system if the death record is still in their Work Queue. The certifier will go to Registration, De-Certify, which will remove the certifier's signature and open medical fields for editing. The medical certifier will again PIN the record.

### **Physician is unable to enter "Date Certifier Signed"**

The Date Certifier Signed is auto-populated when the physician enters their PIN. It is not a field that they can enter manually.

### **Coroner on EDR, Physician not for a co-sign**

Funeral home may do a drop-to-paper and have both physician and coroner sign.

### **Coroner not on EDR**

Funeral home may elect to use the EDR for a Drop-to-Paper registration or use the hard copy/redline method.

### **Physician will not sign EDR record; Coroner will sign in EDR system**

If physician will not sign on EDR, and did not "Decline" the EDR death record, please call the state office and have them decline on behalf of the physician. The record is then available to designate to the coroner in the county of death that is using the EDR system. This death record would also be available to drop-to-paper if the coroner or physician not using EDR is willing to sign.

### **Coroner unable to decertify record in order to amend cause-of-death**

If this is an Amended death record on the EDR system, the coroner would go into the record, and uncheck the Pending box, complete the medical portion and then go into the Registration drop down menu and choose Release Amended.

If the coroner wants to take over the case and De-Certify the death record after the physician has completed cause-of-death, they may go under Registration and choose De-Certify. This will remove the doctor's name and signature and enable all of the fields for editing.

### **Coroner not allowed to enter the funeral home**

If the coroner office has registered an EDR record, prior to the funeral home being selected, the funeral home must submit a correction form to the state vital records office. The state office will add the funeral home, disposition, and other needed information at no charge. (See "Changing to Funeral Home from Coroner's Office" document). The coroner office will be able to see those corrections once they are made.

### **Need to refer to coroner**

Coroner may be referred to after physician has signed, via the Registration menu item. The coroner office then has the option to cosign, decline cosign, transfer jurisdiction or de-certify and take over the case.

### **Coroner signed pending and physician will complete medical cause of death**

1) If coroner signed a "pending" in EDR, and a physician will be completing the certificate in EDR, the coroner would need to sign "On Behalf Of" the physician (check mark this box and search/designate physician) at the time of the pending.

2) If the coroner signed a pending in EDR *without* 'On Behalf Of' a physician, the death record will stay in coroner's EDR work queue until they follow these instructions: *uncheck the "pending" box, make Manner of Death "Natural", and in Cause A write "Cause to be completed by Primary Physician," then they may Release Amended.* The physician should complete the Amend COD form and submit directly to the state office.

3) If coroner signed a "pending" drop-to-paper or a hard copy death certificate, physician will use an Amend COD form to enter cause of death and submit directly to the state office.

### **Coroner will not cosign, wants to sign a completely new death certificate**

When coroners are referred to for a cosign, but want to be the sole medical certifier on the death record rather than the physician, the coroner may go to the Registration drop down and chose De-Certify. This will remove the physician's signature and the coroner may complete the EDR death record as they wish and sign as the medical certifier.