



## **FEMA and NYC HRA COVID-19 Burial Assistance: Death Certificate Navigation Process**

**How do I apply for the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance or NYC Human Resource Administration (HRA) COVID-19 Burial Assistance programs?**

- To apply for the FEMA COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program, visit [fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance](https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance).
- To apply for the NYC HRA COVID-19 Burial Assistance program, visit [www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page).

**Who is entitled to request a death certificate that shows the cause of death?**

Only the following relations to the deceased can request both the death certificate and cause of death: spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, the informant listed on the certificate and the person responsible for disposition.

**How do I get a death certificate that shows the cause of death for someone who died in NYC?**

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) issues death certificates for deaths that occur in the five boroughs of NYC (the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island) and are available after a person's death has been reported by the medical facility and the case has been registered by the NYC Health Department.

When a funeral home is involved, the quickest way to get a death certificate is to order it from the funeral director who made the funeral arrangements. The funeral director can order death certificates for you up to two years after the person's death. Make sure to ask that they order it with the cause of death report.

If a funeral home is not involved yet or if you are not able to order the death certificate from the funeral director, you can also order it online at [vitalchek.com](https://vitalchek.com). See the NYC Health Department's [Death Certificates webpage](#) for additional information on ordering a death certificate. When you select "FEMA Covid-19 Relief" as the reason you are ordering, the cause of death report will automatically be included in your order.

**What is the fee for a death certificate?**

Each certified copy costs \$15. Additional fees apply when ordering a death certificate online.

**Will I get a certified copy of the death record?**

Yes. The NYC Health Department will issue a certified copy of the original death certificate. An NYC-certified death certificate includes several security features to ensure the certificate is

authentic. If you are entitled to the cause of death (see above), you will also receive the “Confidential Medical Report,” which shows the cause of death. This document also shows the name of the decedent and death certificate number, and is printed on bond paper.

**How do I request a cause of death if the cause of death is not noted on the death certificate?**

Please request the cause of death when you order the death certificate.

**Is there a separate fee for the cause of death?**

No. There is no additional fee for the cause of death.

**What do I do if the cause of death shows “pending?”**

If the cause of death shows “pending,” you can exchange the death certificate within three months of the original death certificate issue date. The issue date is noted at the very bottom of the death certificate. You can also order a new death certificate showing the cause of death online, which you will receive quicker than by exchanging the death certificate.

**Why does the certificate show that the cause of death was natural causes when the person died of COVID-19?**

In April 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that in the case of death due to COVID-19 infection, the manner of death will almost always be natural.

**What do I do if the cause of death does not show COVID-19?**

Applicants who incurred COVID-19-related funeral expenses between January 20 and May 16, 2020 will be able to submit a death certificate that does not attribute the death to COVID-19 with a signed statement from the certifying official listed on the death certificate, coroner or medical examiner linking the death to COVID-19. The written statement must show causal pathway or an explanation, linking the cause of death listed on the death certificate to the virus and should be submitted with the death certificate.

Applicants can also contact the medical professional or medical facility who certified the death to request a death certificate amendment if they can provide justification demonstrating the death should be attributed to COVID-19. If you are the informant listed on the death certificate or person in control of disposition, you may submit a request to the NYC Health Department to amend the cause of death. Instructions on what you will need to submit are available [on this webpage](#), in the FAQ, “What is the process to correct a death certificate?”

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**

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