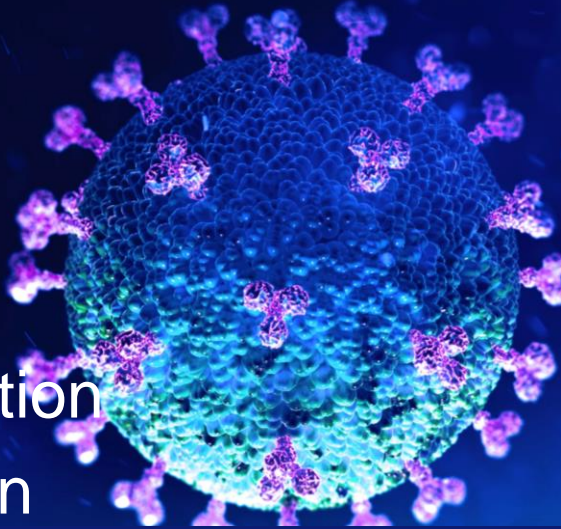


# (COVID-19)



## Death Registration and Certification



### Who creates a death certificate in San Diego County?

Death certificates are created one of three ways, depending on the circumstances of a person's death.

- 1) Hospital—If the patient died in a hospital.
- 2) Funeral Home
- 3) County Medical Examiner

All death certificates are then sent to the County of San Diego Office of Vital Records and Statistics (Office of Vital Records) for registration.

### Where are COVID-19 deaths registered?

All deaths that occur in San Diego County, including those of people whose passing was related to COVID-19, are registered through the California Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) by the Office of Vital Records.

### What is the role of the County Medical Examiner in COVID-19 related deaths?

Government Code 27491 requires medical examiners to inquire into the cause of death in certain circumstances, including deaths known or suspected as due to a contagious disease and constituting a public health hazard, such as a death related to COVID-19.

When the medical examiner is notified of such a death, they issue a referral number for that case, investigate the circumstance of the death, and follow up as appropriate. This referral number is entered into a tracking system and noted on the death certificate.

### How soon after death are deaths registered?

The State of California requires a death certificate to be created and registered within 8 days following the date of death.

### Can anyone get a copy of a death certificate?

Yes and no; there are two types of death certificates:

- 1) **Authorized Certified Copy**—Only authorized legal next of kin can obtain an authorized certified copy of the death certificate, which includes personal information about the deceased person, including his/her social security number and the healthcare provider's signature.
- 2) **Informational Certified Copy**—Anyone able to provide the full name and date of death of the deceased person can obtain an informational certified copy of the death certificate, which has the personal information listed above removed.

### How are COVID-19 cases counted in the County of San Diego epidemiology surveillance data?

The County of San Diego Epidemiology Unit works to identify, investigate, register and evaluate communicable, reportable, and emerging diseases and conditions, which includes COVID-19.

The County of San Diego requests that all deaths related to COVID-19 be reported for surveillance purposes. Medical facilities may report these deaths directly to the Epidemiology Unit or they may be identified by the Office of Vital Records through death certificate registration; The Office of Vital Records notifies the Epidemiology Unit when a new death is registered with COVID-19 listed as a cause of death or underlying condition. In addition, COVID-19 case reports are compared to death certificate data for San Diego County, and matches are evaluated to determine if their infection was related to the cause of death. The Epidemiology Unit compiles and examines the data, and only reports deaths that can be verified by a death certificate or medical record. More information about COVID-19 deaths is available through the [National Center for Health Statistics](#).

### Contact the Office of Vital Records:

Call (619) 692-5733 or e-mail [VRInfo.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:VRInfo.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov).

