



## How to find Washington State DEATH RECORDS

Washington State Library  
[www.sos.wa.gov/library/Genealogy.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/Genealogy.aspx)

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### Who has the records?

Death certificates from July 1, 1907 to two months before the present day are held by the [Washington Department of Health](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/CertificateOrderingInformation.aspx).

[www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/CertificateOrderingInformation.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce/CertificateOrderingInformation.aspx)

For recent death certificates, in the current or previous month, contact the [local health department](http://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions.aspx) where the death occurred. [www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions.aspx)

Anyone can request a copy of a Washington State death certificate from the Department of Health. You do not need to prove a family connection.

### What records are there before 1907?

The counties were responsible for collecting death records before July 1, 1907, which was the day that the state took over.

Most counties kept **death registers**, where each death was 'registered' by entering it into a ledger. Some counties also had death returns, which were single sheets of paper filled out for each deceased person, whose family came to register the death. Unfortunately, some people did not register the deaths in their family with the county, and there are no records for them.

The county death registers have been microfilmed, and are available at the [Washington State Library](http://www.washingtonstate.gov). They have also been scanned and are available on Ancestry.com, and on Washington State Digital Archives (see below).

All of the death records and indexes in our collection are listed in our [online catalog](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/catalog.aspx). [www.sos.wa.gov/library/catalog.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/catalog.aspx)

If you find a title that you would like us to search for a specific name, you can submit a lookup request on our [Ask-A-Librarian](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/ask_form.aspx) page. [www.sos.wa.gov/library/ask\\_form.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/ask_form.aspx)

### Washington State Archives

The State Archives holds the originals of many of the death registers and returns. They will be held at one of the 5 Archives branches around the state. Check out the [map](http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/search.aspx) to locate the correct branch for your county. [www.sos.wa.gov/archives/search.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/search.aspx)

Washington State Archives has begun to digitize the death records in their collections, and the records that have been digitized can be viewed for free on the [Washington State Digital Archives](http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:4) web site. [www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:4](http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:4)

## How can I find a Washington State death date?

There are many good resources available to help you find a date of death in Washington State.

- [Washington State death certificate \(partial\) transcriptions, July 1, 1907-1960](http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/TitleInfo.aspx?tid=472)  
[www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/TitleInfo.aspx?tid=472](http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/TitleInfo.aspx?tid=472)  
[www.familysearch.org/](http://www.familysearch.org/)
- [Washington State obituary indexes & cemetery listings](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/ObituaryResources.aspx)  
[www.sos.wa.gov/library/ObituaryResources.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/ObituaryResources.aspx)
- [Washington Death Index, 1940–1996, on ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) – access by subscription only & has many gaps, the largest is from 1955-1964. The state library has a subscription.  
[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)(\$)
- [Social Security Death Index](http://go.fold3.com/ssdi/) - <http://go.fold3.com/ssdi/>
- The Washington State Library has a Washington State Death Index for **July 1, 1907-2004**. You can submit a specific lookup request on our [Ask-A-Librarian](#) page. Please include a date range, as the index takes up many reels of microfilm.  
[www.sos.wa.gov/library/ask\\_form.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/ask_form.aspx)
- [Death records on the Washington State Digital Archives](http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:4)  
[www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:4](http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:4)
- [Washington Death Index, 1960-1969](http://www.vitalsearch.com) on Vitalsearch.com – these years are available for free on this web site. [www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/wa/vitals/wadeathm-go.htm](http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/wa/vitals/wadeathm-go.htm)

## Additional Resources

### King County

The [King County Archives](#) has a variety of death records in its collection, such as death registers, coroner's records, death certificates and burial permits.

[www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives/vital/death.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/archives/vital/death.aspx)

### Pacific Northwest

[British Columbia Deaths 1872-1988](http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-57D9DA9/gbsearch/Deaths) - <http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-57D9DA9/gbsearch/Deaths>

[California Death Index 1905-1929](http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/ca/vitals/cadeathm.htm) (to access these years for no cost, you must sign up for a free guest pass) - [www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/ca/vitals/cadeathm.htm](http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/ca/vitals/cadeathm.htm)

[Idaho Death Certificates, 1911-1937](http://www.familysearch.org) - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

[Idaho Deaths, 1911–1951](http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/36699) - [www.familytreelegends.com/records/36699](http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/36699)

[Oregon Death Index, 1903–1998](http://www.ancestry.com) - [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)(\$)

[Oregon Historical Records Index](http://genealogy.state.or.us/) (includes some deaths) - <http://genealogy.state.or.us/>

[San Francisco Area Funeral Home Records, 1835-1931](http://www.familysearch.org) - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)