AFTER

ILLINOIS — STATE AND COUNTY CLERKS

Ordering a death certificate in Illinois

Illinois issues death certificates through the state's Division of Vital Records and through the clerk of the county where the death happened. Here's how each one works, with a section for Cook County.



A guide from After

BEFORE YOU START

What you'll need, and **what to know first**

You can order a certified copy from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Division of Vital Records, or from the clerk of the county where the death occurred. The state takes orders online and by mail. County clerks set their own fees, hours, and turnaround.

COST FROM THE STATE

$19 first copy, $4 each additional

WHO CAN ORDER

Relatives, and others with a personal or property right interest

Have these ready before you begin — most of the process is just entering this.

- ✓ A government-issued photo ID that has not expired
- ✓ Your relationship to your loved one, and what you need the copy for
- ✓ Their full legal name, date of death, and the city or county where they died
- ✓ Their date of birth, birthplace, and parents' names, if you know them
- ✓ A letter from the office or agency that needs the certificate, if you're not a relative
- ✓ A credit card to order online, or a check or money order to order by mail

Good to know: IDPH says mailed requests take about 12 weeks to process, and it won't send updates while you wait. If the death happened in Chicago or suburban Cook County, the Cook County Clerk prints most records while you wait — see page 4.

HOW TO ORDER

Three ways **to apply**

Option A — **Online, through the state**

1. **Start from the state's death records page**

   IDPH takes online orders through VitalChek, its online vendor. Use the VitalChek link on the IDPH page so you reach the right order form.

   dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/birth-death-other-records/death-records.html

2. **Enter your details and your loved one's**

   Have their name, date of death, and place of death ready, along with your relationship to them.

3. **Pay by credit card**

   $19 for the first certified copy and $4 for each additional copy, plus a $15 handling fee. UPS delivery is optional for $22 within the U.S. A major credit card is required.

Option B — **By mail, to the state**

1. **Complete the Application for Illinois Death Record**

   Fill in the whole form and sign it. You can download it from the IDPH death records page above.

2. **Add a copy of your ID and your payment**

   Include a photocopy of your photo ID and a check or money order payable to the Illinois Department of Public Health. Don't send cash.

3. **Mail it to the Division of Vital Records**

   Allow about 12 weeks. If it's urgent, IDPH asks you to send it by overnight delivery with proof of immediate need and a prepaid overnight return envelope.

   MAIL TO

   IDPH Vital Records
   110 West Lawrence Avenue, Springfield, IL 62704-2610

Option C — **Through your county clerk**

The clerk of the county where the death occurred also issues certified copies. Fees, hours, and turnaround differ by county, so check with yours first. IDPH points to this directory of county clerks:

iaccr.net

COOK COUNTY

Chicago and **suburban Cook County**

The Cook County Clerk keeps the official records of deaths that happen in Chicago and suburban Cook County. You'll need to show you're a relative or can prove a financial interest.

COST FROM THE CLERK

$17 first copy, $6 each additional

IN PERSON

Most records printed while you wait

- ✓ **Online or by phone:** order through VitalChek, or call toll-free at (866) 252-8974. Online orders add $12.45 for processing and standard postage, and take 10 to 15 business days by regular mail or 5 to 10 by UPS once approved.
- ✓ **In person:** visit the downtown Chicago office or one of three suburban courthouses. Card payments carry a $1.75 fee for credit or $1.25 for debit, and checks aren't accepted in person.
- ✓ **By mail:** send proof of your relationship or financial interest, a photocopy of your photo ID, a check or money order payable to the Cook County Clerk, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and your phone number to Cook County Clerk's Office, Bureau of Vital Records, P.O. Box 641070, Chicago, IL 60664-1070.

cookcountyclerkil.gov/vital-records/birth-death-records/death-certificates

ELIGIBILITY

Who can request **a certified copy**

Illinois death records aren't public records. The state releases them only to people with a personal or property right interest in the record:

- ✓ A relative of your loved one, including a spouse
- ✓ Someone with a property right interest, such as a car title or property deed
- ✓ An attorney, or someone acting for your loved one's estate
- ✓ Anyone else who sends a letter from the office or agency that needs the certificate

Good to know: the $19 copy is the long form, which IDPH describes as accepted for all legal use. A $10 short form leaves out the cause of death, so ask the organization requesting the certificate which one it needs.

IDENTIFICATION

If your ID **has expired**

The state accepts a driver's license, state ID, or passport. If yours is out of date, you can still apply:

- ✓ Expired less than six months ago: add one document that shows your name and current address
- ✓ Expired more than six months ago, or no photo ID: send a bill or other mail showing your name and current address, plus a second item such as a bank statement or insurance card
- ✓ Social Security cards aren't accepted as identification

COMMON QUESTIONS

Any questions? **We've got answers**

I don't know the exact date or details of the death.

Reach out to your Care Specialist at After — we can look that up and provide it for you.

What if there's an error on the certificate itself?

The state handles corrections through its Affidavit and Certificate of Correction Request. Reach out to your Care Specialist — we can help you get started.

What if the death didn't happen in Illinois?

Order from the vital records office in the state where the death took place.

Should I order from the state or my county clerk?

Either can issue a certified copy. The state's mail queue is about 12 weeks, so it's worth asking your county clerk what its turnaround is before you choose.

We're here if **you need us**

Ordering paperwork while you're grieving is hard. You don't have to figure it out alone — call any time, day or night.

844-905-2639 care@after.com after.com

Fees and timing checked November 10, 2026 against dph.illinois.gov and cookcountyclerkil.gov. Agencies change them, so confirm before you order. We provide cremation services only where we hold the required state licenses.