AFTER

CALIFORNIA — STATE AND COUNTY OFFICES

Ordering a death certificate **in California**

In California you can order from the county where the death happened or from the state. Here's how both work, with sections for Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, and Ventura counties.



BEFORE YOU START

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

California death certificates come from the county where the death was registered or from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). CDPH says you can often get a certificate more quickly from the county. Certified copies come in two types: Authorized, for family and legal representatives, and Informational, for anyone else.

COST AT COUNTY OFFICES
$26 per certified copy

COPY TYPES
Authorized or Informational

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

- ✓ Your loved one's full legal name
- ✓ The date of death and the county where it happened
- ✓ Your relationship to your loved one, for an Authorized copy
- ✓ A government-issued photo ID
- ✓ A notarized sworn statement, for Authorized copies ordered by mail
- ✓ A credit or debit card online, or a check or money order by mail

Good to know: fees are charged even if no record is found. The county offices in this guide each list $26 per copy. CDPH's own fee page lists $24 per copy for orders sent to the state, so confirm the amount before you mail a check.

HOW TO ORDER

Two places **to apply**

Option A — **The county where the death happened**

County offices take orders online, by mail, and in person, and are usually the faster route. The next two pages cover Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, and Ventura counties. For Riverside and San Bernardino counties, see After's separate county guides.

Option B — **By mail, to the state**

1. **Complete the death record application (form VS 112)**
   Choose an Authorized or an Informational copy.
2. **Have your sworn statement notarized**
   Required for an Authorized copy. CDPH returns Authorized requests that arrive without it.
3. **Mail it to CDPH Vital Records**
   CDPH's average processing time for a certified copy is 5 to 7 weeks from when it receives your request.

   MAIL TO
   California Department of Public Health, Vital Records – MS 5103
   P.O. Box 997410, Sacramento, CA 95899-7410

cdph.ca.gov — Obtaining Certified Copies of Death Records

COUNTY OFFICES

Los Angeles and **Orange counties**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk holds Los Angeles County death records and charges $26 per copy. For deaths in the current or prior year, the Department of Public Health's Vital Records Office also issues copies, at $24 each, except for deaths in Long Beach and Pasadena.

- ✓ **Online:** through VitalChek, with a handling fee. Orders are processed within 20 working days.
- ✓ **By mail:** send the application, a notarized Certificate of Identity, and a check or money order payable to Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to PO Box 489, Norwalk, CA 90651-0489. Copies are mailed within 20 working days.
- ✓ **In person:** by appointment at 12400 Imperial Hwy., Norwalk. Certificates for deaths from 1995 on are issued at your appointment.

ORANGE COUNTY

- ✓ **Cost:** $26 per copy from the Orange County Clerk-Recorder.
- ✓ **In person:** complete the application online first, then bring photo ID to the Santa Ana, Anaheim, or Laguna Hills office. Certificates are generally issued the same day.
- ✓ **By mail:** send a signed, notarized request form and a check payable to County of Orange to P.O. Box 238, Santa Ana, CA 92702. Most orders are processed within 5 to 10 business days.

COUNTY OFFICES

San Diego and **Ventura counties**

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

For deaths within the last two years, order from the County's Office of Vital Records and Statistics. For earlier deaths, order from the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk. Both charge $26 per copy.

- ✓ **Recent deaths:** Office of Vital Records, 5530 Overland Avenue, Suite 170, San Diego, CA 92123. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mail orders go to the same address, payable to County of San Diego.
- ✓ **Earlier deaths:** Recorder/County Clerk offices in downtown San Diego, Chula Vista, Santee, and San Marcos, with no appointment required. Mail to P.O. Box 121750, San Diego, CA 92112-1750.
- ✓ **Online:** through VitalChek, with a $12.95 handling fee and optional $19 express delivery.

VENTURA COUNTY

- ✓ **Cost:** $26 per copy from the County Clerk and Recorder, plus $2.50 per transaction if you pay by card at the counter.
- ✓ **In person:** by appointment, booked through the Clerk-Recorder's website.
- ✓ **By mail:** send the application, a notarized sworn statement, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and a check or money order to County Clerk and Recorder, 800 S. Victoria Ave., Location #1260, Ventura, CA 93009.
- ✓ **Online:** through VitalChek, which adds $12.95 with regular mail or $19 with UPS.

ELIGIBILITY

Who can request **an Authorized copy**

California law limits Authorized certified copies of a death record to:

- ✓ A parent, legal guardian, child, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner
- ✓ An attorney for the estate, or someone appointed by a court or empowered by statute to act for the estate
- ✓ Surviving next of kin, or a funeral establishment acting for the family
- ✓ Law enforcement or another government agency on official business

Good to know: anyone else can order an Informational copy. It carries the same information but is stamped "Informational, Not a Valid Document to Establish Identity."

SWORN STATEMENT

When you need **a notary**

- ✓ By mail: sign the sworn statement in front of a notary public and send it with your application
- ✓ In person: you sign at the counter and show a government-issued photo ID
- ✓ Online: VitalChek may ask for a notarized certificate of identity to complete the order

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?

Corrections happen at the state level, through CDPH. Reach out to your Care Specialist — we can help you request an Amendment to the Death Record.

Do I need an Authorized copy?

For your own records, an Informational copy works. Ask each organization which type it accepts.

My county isn't in this guide.

Order from the county where the death was registered, or from the state by mail.

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 cdph.ca.gov and the Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego and Ventura county pages. Agencies change them, so confirm before you order. We provide cremation services only where we hold the required state licenses.