

'Short' Certified Copies of Death Records for Property Transfers

In June 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2093 known as the Vital Records Modernization bill. This bill takes effect January 1, 2014. One of the provisions of the law requires that certified copies of death records used to transfer property not include cause of death information.

Why not include cause of death information?

Death records are confidential in Oregon. Property records are public information. To meet both needs as well as we can, certified copies of death must have the information necessary to identify the property owner (name, date of birth, spouse's name, parents' names) and not include information that does not affect the property transfer (cause of death, tobacco use, pregnancy in past year). Since the certified copy of the death record is maintained with the property records, it must be a short form without cause of death information.

This new requirement applies to all certified copies submitted to transfer property in Oregon where:

- The death occurred after 1977 and
- The death occurred in Oregon and
- The certified copy is issued after January 1, 2014.

Certified copies that do not include cause of death information, also called 'short' forms, are available from the same sources as certified copies that include cause of death information (long forms). The county where the death occurred can issue certified copies up to six months after date of event and the state vital records office issues certified copies at all times. There is no difference in cost between a short form and a long form.

The Center for Health Statistics has information on HB 2093 available online at <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/Pages/hb2093.aspx>. If you have questions about the new law, you can contact Karen Hampton at Karen.R.Hampton@state.or.us or by telephone 971-673-1191.