

What to Do When a Loved One Passes Away

To settle the affairs of your loved one, you may need to work with various agencies and departments in Pierce County. This process can feel overwhelming but we're here to help.

1 Contact a funeral facility.

Your loved one may have planned with a funeral facility before they passed away or may have named their desired funeral facility in their will.

If your loved one did not name a funeral facility, choose one that fits your budget and needs.

The funeral facility will help you:

- Complete the official death record.
- Make the funeral arrangements for your loved one.

To create a state death record, a funeral facility located in Washington needs to help.

2 Get a death certificate.

You can order certificates through the:

- **Funeral home**—for up to 12 months from the date of death.
- **Health Department Vital Records**—if your loved one died in Washington state.

There are fees for death certificates. We accept cash, credit, and cashier's check.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Vital Records

3629 S. D St.
Tacoma, WA 98418

Monday–Friday
8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
(closed holidays)

(253) 649-1402
tpchd.org/certificates

A death certificate is an official legal record of death.

It includes information about the person who died and their cause of death.

Many agencies require death certificates to make changes to accounts and claim benefits.

You also need a death certificate to:

- Probate a will.
- Claim insurance benefits.
- Update bank accounts, CDs, and IRAs.
- File taxes.
- Process title transfers.
- Update utility records.
- And more...

YOU CAN
ORDER
ONLINE, IN
PERSON, OR
BY MAIL.

When you order a death certificate, you need to provide:

- The person's full name.
- Date of death.
- Place of death.
- Your address, and phone number.
- Your identity documentation.
- Proof you are a qualified candidate—eligibility documentation.



Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities



You must show proof you are a qualified applicant.

You are a qualified applicant if you are a:

- Spouse or domestic partner.
- Parent, stepparent, or legal guardian.
- Child or stepchild.
- Sibling.
- Grandparent or great grandparent.
- Grandchild.
- Legal representative.
- Authorized representative.
- Next of kin (only if no one else from this list is living).
- Funeral director or funeral facility named on the record (up to 12 months from the date of death).
- Government agency or courts (if the death certificate is for official duties).

Questions about qualified applicants? Contact Washington State Department of Health (DOH) at **(360) 236-4300** or contactchs@doh.wa.gov.

3

Change public documents.

After a loved one passes away, accounts need to be closed and public documents need to be changed. Below are some local agencies that you may need to work with to settle their affairs.

Pierce County Annex

2401 S. 35th St.
Tacoma, WA 98409

Auditor—Room 200
Assessor-Treasurer—
Room 142

Monday–Friday
8:30 a.m.–12 p.m. and
1–4:30 p.m.
(253) 798-7427

You can get help with:

- Vehicle and vessel titles.
- Real estate.
- Passports.
- Recording.
- Marriage licenses.
- Property taxes.

Pierce County Clerk's Office

County-City Building
930 Tacoma Ave. S.
Tacoma, WA 98402

Monday–Friday
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
(253) 798-7455

Tacoma Public Utilities

3628 S. 35th St.
Tacoma, WA 98409

Monday–Friday
8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
(253) 502-8600

What is eligibility documentation?

Eligibility documentation links you to the person on the record and proves you are a qualified applicant.

Some examples include:

- Copies of vital records (like birth or marriage certificates).
- Copies of certified court orders (like legal guardianship court orders or court orders listing someone as the foster parent).
- Document or letter from a government agency or court.

What is identity documentation?

Identity documentation is a photo ID that proves you are who you say you are.

Some examples include:

- Washington enhanced driver's license (EDL), driver's license (DL), permit, or identification (ID) card.
- Out-of-state EDL, REAL ID, DL, or ID card.
- U.S. passport or card.
- Consulate card.
- Foreign passport, DL, or ID card.
- Permanent resident card.

Need more info?

For a complete list of acceptable identity and eligibility documents, visit doh.wa.gov/vitalrecords.



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