



Rhode Island Vital Events Registration System (RIVERS)

Frequently Asked Questions for Medical Certifiers

December 29, 2021

What is an EDRS?

EDRS stand for Electronic Death Registration System. The EDRS is a web-based application used to electronically register and record deaths that occur in Rhode Island.

Why is the state moving to an electronic system?

Currently, Rhode Island is one of only four states that does not enter records electronically. RIVERS will allow medical certifiers to complete death records electronically. This system was implemented to support the national effort for reporting timely and accurate data to the National Center for Health Statistics.

What are the benefits of RIVERS?

RIVERS will:

- Eliminate paper records.
- Allow medical certifiers and funeral directors to complete records electronically.
- Allow certifiers to complete death records using mobile technology (phone, tablet, etc.).
- Provide better quality data.
- Enable a more timely turnaround of the death record.

When did the State start working on the transition to RIVERS?

The State has been working to implement RIVERS for almost a year. Beginning in April 2021, communications about the transition were emailed to all stakeholders, including healthcare facilities, medical certifiers, and funeral homes. RIDOH's email distribution list was created using contact information in the State's licensing database. If you do not have a current email entered in the licensing database, you may not have received prior communications.

How do I register for training?

Your facility will receive a link that includes training dates and times, and that link will be forwarded to you. You can register electronically for the day and time that is most convenient for you.

What if I can't attend the training I registered for?

You should cancel your registration if you can no longer attend the training.

How can I get trained if I cannot attend one of the trainings?

There are three ways to get training:

1. Attend a scheduled webinar.
2. Download the recorded training session and supporting materials from RIDOH's website.
3. Register for one of the ad hoc training sessions during the "Go Live" week of January 4, 2022.

How can I get additional training?

You can request additional training from QuantumMark, the vendor that is providing training.

How can I sign up to be a user in RIVERS?

Medical certifiers, healthcare facility users, and funeral directors can enroll as a user in RIVERS by completing the *New User Enrollment Form*. The link to the form will be provided at the end of the training.

When will I receive my username and password?

On January 4, users will receive an email from the RIVERS system, noreply@RIhostingby-genesis.com containing a username and password to begin using the system.

What are the technical requirements for RIVERS?

- RIVERS will be accessible through web pages on Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, and Edge.
- Laptops, computers, mobile devices, and tablets must be able to use Safari N-1, Chrome. Android devices must use the browser N-1 or greater.
- Users must have a live internet connection and a widely used JavaScript enabled standard web browser.
- Users must have Adobe Acrobat reader to access pdf versions of forms and letters and Excel for accessing and running reports.

Will there be a RIVERS help desk?

Yes. The RIDOH RIVERS help desk will be available Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Vendor support will be available after hours and on weekends.

I forgot my password. How can I recover it?

Any user can reset their own password by using the *Forgot Password* link on the RIVERS landing page.

I forgot my username. How can I recover it?

To recover a username, call 401-222-2813 or email doh.riversassistance@health.ri.gov.

What do I do if my facility affiliation or contact information changes?

Any changes to a facility affiliation or contact information should be emailed to doh.riversassistance@health.ri.gov.

What if a decedent is not identified (i.e., Jane or John Doe)?

If the decedent name is unknown, it can be reported as *unknown* to create and certify the record. As per the 2003 revision of the US Standard Certificate of Death, do not enter John Doe or Jane Doe as a name for an unidentified decedent. Medical records staff can update demographic information on the medical tabs. The funeral director will complete the demographic information on the demographic tabs of the record.

Is there an interface between RIVERS and EPIC?

Currently, there is only an interface from the Office of Medical Examiners' Case Management System. RIDOH, the State Division of Information Technology (DoIT), Lifespan, and Care New England will continue discussions about an interface between RIVERS and EPIC in mid-2022.

Do certifiers have to data enter the actual diagnoses?

Yes. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) does not allow us to use a drop-down list of ICD-10 codes for cause of death. Jurisdictions are required to report the actual diagnosis, then NCHS assigns an ICD10 code for the cause of death.

What if the physician does not complete the death record in a timely manner?

You can send the medical certifier a reminder through RIVERS, and if they are still not completing the record, you should contact the Center for Vital Records Help Desk.

Will paper records be accepted?

The State of Rhode Island is requiring the adoption and use of RIVERS for death and fetal death reporting when the system goes live on January 4, 2022. In the event of an emergency that prevents you from registering a death record electronically, RIDOH will accept paper records until **January 31, 2022**. Beginning **February 1, 2022**, RIDOH will no longer accept these paper records.

Can providers initiate a record?

Yes, providers and funeral home directors can initiate a death record.

Can providers print the certificate from the system?

Providers can print a medical abstract from the system.

What happens if a provider certified and approved the BTP without designating a funeral home?

Certification will not be affected. Funeral home designation can happen after certification. If they cannot designate the funeral director, the state can designate the funeral home, or the funeral home can create the record independently.

Please address pronouncer vs certifier and how certifier may not know pronouncer (e.g., RN at nursing home)

The pronouncer is the person who declared the death. The certifier is the person who is determining the cause of death and certifying to the facts of death. The facility user (such as medical records staff) or facility administrator can complete the pronouncer field if the certifier does not know this information.

Who can pronounce a death in RI?

[Rhode Island law](#) requires physicians, as defined by the [Rules and Regulations Governing Vital Records](#), to sign death certificates, but it is silent on the issue of pronouncement of death. Therefore, it is the policy of the Department of Health that, with respect to the expected death of a person who is receiving nursing services in the home and for whom the attending physician has included documentation of such expected death in the patient's medical record, a registered nurse may pronounce death (i.e., determine biological death), but must then notify the attending physician.

Who can certify a death in RI?

Medical doctors (MD/DO), a nurse practitioner or physician assistant that is licensed in the State of Rhode Island may certify a death certificate.

Does the Funeral Director need to notify social security administration?

No, the new RIVERS system uses OVS2, this is an online verification system with social security administration, this function replaces the need to complete the 721 form.

Does the Funeral Director need to notify the state health dept each month with total deaths?

No, the Funeral Director will no longer need to submit monthly death totals, all data is captured in the system.

What if we don't have date of disposition for cremation?

This field accepts “?” as an unknown value if the date of disposition is not yet known.

Is this system designed for clinical only?

No, this system was designed for use by facilities and funeral homes.

Once we release the record, are we not able to order additional certified copies? If that is the case, how do we request more certified copies?

After the record has been released, additional certified copies may be obtained at any city/town in Rhode Island either in person or by mail. They may also be obtained by mail from the Center for Vital Records.

Will certifiers be required to have an online presence in this system?

All certifiers are required to be licensed in Rhode Island to certify deaths. All users will be assigned a username and password to use this system. If a certifier is not listed, they are not enrolled to use the system. The user can complete the new user enrollment form, this can be located on the RIVERS homepage, or send an email to doh.riversassistance@health.ri.gov.

At a hospice facility will the physician need to be awakened and fill this out for every patient who dies overnight? so that the body can be released?

No, you will proceed as usual and complete the death certificate upon notification.

Should referrals to the ME still be called in to the ME line, or does the online referral replace this process? To be sure, do we still call the ME in applicable cases or is it online contact only?

This is an Office of the State Medical Examiners process and should remain the same as it currently is unless instructed otherwise by the Office of the State Medical Examiners.

Can it be personal email, or does it have to be work email?

It should be a work email address as this system contains HIPAA protected information and notifications may contain names and date of death of decedents.

Do we get an alert once the medical examiner has reviewed the record?

If the medical examiner accepts or rejects a record, all stakeholders will be notified. If they redesignate the record back to the facility after review, the facility will receive an email notification that the record has been redesignated and is waiting to be accepted.

Is the “go live” date going to be for all deaths at all facilities across the state?”

Yes, the go-live date is January 4, 2022.

Does the physician have to approve the burial transit permit?

If the death record was certified, the burial transit permit does not need a separate approval process. If the death record was not certified, the physician can approve the burial transit permit prior to certification.

After we certify- can we modify again

If you need to make changes to a record after it has been certified, the record can be de-certified by an authorized user if it has not yet been released. Once it has been de-certified, it will be available to make the appropriate changes and re-certified.

Can you add a facility if necessary (for example in a crisis where we might have to work at another hospital)?

Any changes to a facility affiliation or contact information should be emailed to doh.riversassistance@health.ri.gov or contact the State Office of Vital Records at 401-222-2813.

How do we know if we are "registered"?

When you are successfully registered, you will receive an email notification with your username and password as well as a link to the RIVERS system. You will then be able to log into the system using that information.

How quick is the turn-around for the ME to accept the case?

This is dependent on the Office of the State Medical Examiners, the Medical Examiners will be reviewing cases daily.

If we want to watch this again. Will we be sent a recording?

You can download the recorded training session and supporting materials from RIDOH's website <https://health.ri.gov/records/>

Does the funeral home information need to be entered first before MD can certify the certificate?

No, the demographic information is not required for medical certification.

Are the pronouncing and attending physician sections mandatory? At our facility, the Medical Certifier will start the process and will often be the same provider for all sections. We want to ensure the process is simplified for those circumstances.

Yes, the pronouncing and attending physician sections are mandatory fields. These fields contain drop-down lists that generate a list of all licensed certifiers.