

# Electronic Death Registration

## Online Verification of Social Security Number

### Background

Initial development of an Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) in Minnesota was an intrinsic part of the Vital Statistics Redesign Project, a five-year project from July 1997 through June 2002 to develop an integrated electronic system (MN VRV2000) for collecting, processing, and reporting birth and death information. Key goals of MN VRV2000 are to promote data quality, data timeliness, customer service, fraud prevention, and to improve data processing efficiency.

### Death Registration

EDRS is a web based component of MN VRV2000, which is currently available statewide to all users. Death records are filed in MN VRV2000 for each death that occurs in Minnesota. Funeral establishments provide fact-of-death and demographic information and physicians provide cause-of-death information. Coroners and medical examiners approve cremations and may provide fact of death and cause of death information.

### Online Verification of Social Security Number

Through online verification of social security number (SSN), a decedent's SSN reported through death registration is transmitted to the Social Security Administration (SSA) to be electronically verified. Funeral directors receive notification through MN VRV2000 about the accuracy of the SSN as compared with the name, sex, and date of birth reported on the death record.

Through MN VRV2000, fact of death is transmitted to SSA within one day (24 hours) of the date the death record was filed.

### Implementation

Minnesota implemented online verification of decedent social security number in September 2004. California, the District of Columbia, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York City, South Carolina, South Dakota and Washington have also implemented online verification. Hawaii and Texas are scheduled to implement by the end of 2005.

### Benefits

Eliminates the need for funeral establishments to fax decedent information to SSA. Online verification will occur regardless of who enters the record.

Reduces the need to later amend the death record through the online verification of the accuracy of the decedent's SSN.

Increases the reliability of the SSN reported on the death record. A decedent's SSN verified by SSA will ensure accuracy for families when applying for life insurance or social security benefits.

Decreases the amount of time between the death and reliable notification of the fact of death to SSA. SSA estimated that learning of deaths faster will save:

- \$52 million annually in incorrect payments; and
- over 200,000 hours of work annually.

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SSA

MDH

EDRS