Montana’s Electronic Death Registration System User Manual (Data Entry)

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Montana Electronic Death Registration System
Data Entry User Manual

**General Information:** The Montana EDRS is a component of the Vital Statistics Information Management System (VSIMS). It is a web base secure 128 bit encrypted system that requires login access. User ID’s are assigned by the department and are reviewed and verified every six months. The system incorporates several features designed to ensure a user only has access to righted data, the correct data is submitted, and to limit the amount of typing required. User are assigned roles that determine what information or actions that user can view or add to the certificate.

**Data Entry:** In some cases, data response is limited to pull down menu options; a down arrow in the right hand corner of the field box identifies these. Data needs only be provided once if the same data is used elsewhere in another portion of the certificate, a single entry will populate all similar fields. For example, to verify the SSN: the Decedents name, SSN, Date of Birth, and Gender must be entered, when they are typed for SSN verification they also populate the same fields in the certificate. Some fields are linked to tables, when activated the selection from a subsequent table are limited to only the applicable data. For example, when the county of death is selected, only the cities and towns in that county are listed. When a town or location is not listed, a selection of “Other” will allow the entry of something not listed. If for some reason the event crosses the county line, for example, if the decedent dies in one county but is being bury in another, there is a “Show all Counties” button at the top of each listing, selection of this will show in alphabetical order all of the selection for the category. Other features will be identified throughout the narrative of the screen prints. Screen print of the tables which are common i.e. Counties, Towns, etc. will be presented at the end of this narrative in Appendix A.

At the bottom of most pages, there are two links:

1. “Home” will return the user to the home page from anywhere in the process with logging out
2. “Logout” will log the user out of the system.
**Help:** The program features several help options. Help is available by simply placing the mouse cursor on the field; a prompt as to what should be in the field will appear. More detailed help is available by placing the mouse in the field and right clicking the mouse, a popup that contains information or limitations will be displayed.

![Personal Information Form](image)

**Example Of Tag Help**

![Example of Tag Help](image)

**Example of Right Click Help**
Part I: Login

1. Welcome Screen: When the web page is accessed, a Welcome Screen will be displayed. The menu on the left side of the screen offers three choices: Login, Contact Us, PHHS Home. Contact us will direct the screen to open the email and allow the user to send the Vital Statistics Bureau a message. PHHS home opens the Montana DPHHS home page.
2. Login Screen

Selection of the Login Option on the left menu presents a popup window used to enter the system. The user name is assigned by the Department of Public Health and Human Services after the user has completed training and has signed a DPHHS form OM-300B Non-DPHHS Employee System/File Access Request. Access is reviewed and verified every six months.

Login Popup

3. Homepage Page:

Once logged in the user will be sent to a Home Page. At the top right of the page, it acknowledges who is logged in and the present role selected. The menu on the left side of the page controls the functions available to the user. For example, a funeral home will have the Death and Messages displayed. The middle section of the screen indicates if there are any messages that need to be read.
Messages can be sent to all users for things such as scheduled downtime or to an individual user or group of users to inquire about a death certificate. A banner “You have messages” will appear. To display the message, click on the banner. The following will screen appear:

![Message Screen]

To read the message click on the subject of the message, this in will be in blue and will be next to the word “Subject”. The message screen below will be displayed:

![View Message Screen]

4. Assigned Roles:

The “Current Assignment” the facility or role currently being used will be at the top right of the screen, to change facilities or to change roles, click on the role listed in the right hand corner (it will be in Blue) Note: The menu on the left side of the screen will change, select “Assignments” from the menu, the following screen will be displayed to change your role select the desired role using the radio buttons to the right, and select “Complete”.

![User Maintenance - Assignments Screen]
5. **Main Action Page:**

The pull down box in the upper part of the page is used to display various actions. Selection of “Incomplete death certificates (user only)” will list all of the records which the individual has open and are pending. “Incomplete death certificates (facility)” will list all of the pending records assigned to the facility to which the user is associated.

Below this option box a list of the certificates started that have not been completed and submitted to the state will be displayed. Each line identifies the last and first name of the decedent (in Bold), the role of the assignment, the date of death, and the user to whom the certificate belongs. Selecting the “Edit/View” option will open that certificate for additional edits. Once a certificate has been completed and submitted it is removed from this list.

This menu on the left side of the screen provides the user with two options: “New Death Cert” will move to a query screen that checks to see if the certificate exists. “Query Death Cert” will move the user to another screen that will search for any previously certificates completed by the user organization.
Part II New Certificates

1. New Certificate Inquiry Page:

When “New Certificate” is selected from the left menu, it is first necessary to check and ensure that the certificate does not exist. Queries entered in this page will search the entire database and will match any possible complete and incomplete records.

The minimum information needed to do a search is last name and year of death. When the desired data is entered, pressing the “Continue/Search” will activate the search. “Clear” removes the information on the form for a new search. “Home” will return you to the home page.

2. Query Search result (No Match Found):

This screen shows the results of a new certificate search when no records matched. The buttons at the bottom allow a “New Search” this will return to the New Certificate Inquiry Page, the “Home” button will return to the Home page, and the “New Record” will open the “Authorization for Removal, Transportation and Final Disposition Tab (ART)” so a new record can be started. The information already entered as search criteria, would already populate the appropriate fields.
3. Query Search result (Match Found):

![Screenshot of VSIMS User Interface](image)

Above is the screen if a record matched an existing complete or incomplete record, note that the name searched matched a record with an alias. If this was the correct record and it is owned by the facility, clicking on the blue link will bring up the record. If the record has been submitted or the control of the record belongs to someone other than the user, then selecting the record would return the following message.

![Warning Message](image)

Note: All these records have a file number, this indicates that the certificate has been filed with the state these are not accessible. If there were incomplete records no file numbers would be displayed.

To begin a new certificate, select “New Record” this will open the “Authorization for Removal, Transportation and Final Disposition Tab (ART)” so a new record can be started. The information already entered as search criteria, would already populate the appropriate fields. This will also change the menu selection on the left-hand side of the screen.
Part III: New Certificate Entry and Edit

A. Side Menu Descriptions:

The selection of “New Record” or opening an existing incomplete record will change the left side menu options. There will be 14 menu selections; these are used to go to various information sections that are needed to complete the death certificate. Selecting a menu selection moves the user to that tab. The titles below the tab identify the full name of the tab, the name of the decedent on the record, and the date of death. The tab information is as follows:

1. **ART** - This is to complete the “Authorization for Removal, Transportation, and Final Disposition of a Dead Body” form. (Burial permit in most States) SSN online validation can be done from this tab.
2. **Decedent** - This contains demographic information about the decedent and the facts of the death. SSN online validation can also be done from this tab.
3. **Birth/Residence** - This contains information about the decedent and the demographic facts of the birth and residence of the decedent.
4. **Informant** - This provides information about who gave the information regarding the decedent and the death.
5. **Certifier** - This contains information regarding pronouncing of the death and certifying the cause of death.
6. **Disposition** – This contains information regarding how the body was disposed of.
7. **Validation Results** - displays the results from the validation check.
8. **Print Certificate** – this is used to print a copy of the certificate.
9. **Action History**- shows the history of the registration process.
10. **Admin**- Allows the user to delete incomplete certificates
11. **Death Main Action**- Returns the display to the Action Menu page.
12. **Amendment Screen** – For future development it will be used for an electronic amendment process.
13. **Home** – returns the display to the Home page.
14. **Logout** – Logs out of the system

Data will be lost and will need to be reentered if a “Save” is not done when moving between tabs. Because some of the tabs are long and will not fit on a single screen, they will be described in sections. The name of the tab followed by the sections being presented will be at the top of each screen print.
B. Authorization, for Removal, Transportation, and Disposition Of a Dead Body Tab (ART)

1. ART Tab Decedent Information

This is the first tab used to begin the entry of a certificate. This page can also be used to verify the SSN. Any information typed on the previous page is also viewed on this page likewise any information entered on this page will populate the same field on the other tabs. The AKA button opens a second screen (See below) that allows the user to record up to eight alias names. The little number beside the button indicates how many AKA’s have been entered. Once the data required is entered (i.e. Name, SSN, Date of birth, and gender) the “Verify SSN” button begins the online verification process.

If the date of birth is after the date of death, an on screen warning appears and the error must be fixed before proceeding:

Likewise if the date of death and the date of birth exceeded 135 years the following warning will appear:
There are several pull down menus to select standard responses to Sex, actual or approximate date and time of death. The “county”, “city, town location of death” and the “Place of death facility” are all interrelated. That is once the county is selected only those cities and towns in the county will be displayed and only the facilities in that town will be displayed. If needed a “Show All Counties” button will display the complete listings. Additionally, there are fields labeled “Specify other”, these are used to clarify data when “Other” is selected on one of the pull down menus.

2. AKA Sub Menu: Selection of the AKA button displays a sub screen option will allow for the entry of up to eight Alias names.

3. SSN Online Verification: The “Verification Button” on the ART and Decedent tabs is used for online verification of the decedent’s social security number with the Social Security Administration’s main database. Selecting the verification button displays a sub screen used to control and monitor the verification process. In addition to viewing the ‘verification status’ flag, this screen will allow the user to drill down into the ‘verification action’ details to see specifics on each verification attempt made. This process performs two main functions:
1. Submitting new and repeat verification requests to the EVS after insuring that EVS requirements are met and the valid time period for verification requests is in effect.

2. Updating the EDRS system when verification request status is updated by the EVS.

Once a SSN has been validated then the SSN and Name is locked from further changes. The status of the SSN verification is also displayed in the field to the left of the button as on the screen below.

4. **ART Tab: Authorization Information, Disposition Information, and Cremation Authorization:**

   Authorization information is the person who is assuming responsibility for the final disposition of the body. If it is the person who is logged in, selection of “Current User is Mortician responsible” will populate the data fields automatically. If a mortician other than the user is responsible then the pull down menu will list only the morticians in the county listed above and the funeral facility will list only the facilities to which he is associated. A mortician not listed in the county can be displayed by selecting a button labeled “Show All Counties”

   Disposition Information is to document the method and place of disposition. The pull down “Method of Disposition” has the choices of: Burial, Cremation, Removal from State, Entombment, Donation, or Other. (If other is selected then “Specify Other Method Disposition”
must be completed.) The pull down menu displays only those cemeteries or crematories located in the county, again there is an option show all of the cemeteries and crematories in the state.

Cremation Authorization This is used for a coroner to authorize the cremation of the body.

5. **Bottom Buttons (Visible on all tabs):** There are five buttons across the bottom of the every data entry page, these five buttons are common to all the tabs and will be discussed here. The print ART button is unique to the ART and will be discussed last.

1. **“Save”:** This saves the work done to the point no validation or checks are done
2. **“Continue”:** This moves the user to the next tab the data is saved but not validated.
3. **“Validate”:** When this button is pressed validation processes defined for the current open action are performed and the user is transferred to the “Validation Results” page where a list is displayed of any problems encountered during validation. This process can be re-iterated as many times as desired.

It is important to note that validation is performed for the current open Action only. For Example: If the current Action is Certify Death, assigned by a Mortician and now opened by a Physician, then only the validation defined for that Action will be performed (i.e. it will validate all the Certifier data). The actual validation rules enforced are completely definable within the validation system.
4. “Transfer /Reject”: When a death certificate is opened (on the web site), for data entry, what actually is opened is an “Action” record that is associated with a particular death certificate. There are many different types of Action records that can be associated with a death certificate. An Action record is a way of controlling what activities are appropriate and/or relevant for a particular editing session of a certificate.

At the bottom of each data entry web page there is a button labeled “Transfer/Reject”. This is the same button on each page and all it does is call an auxiliary web page, which displays, and allows certain changes to, the current assignment of Actions associated with the death certificate in progress. The page has three sections:

1) Current Action: This section always contains only one Action record – it is the Action which is currently open and could be either a parent Action such as Funeral Home Entry or it could be a Sub-Action which has been assigned and opened. The Current Action can be re-assigned here to another user and/or facility by selecting User or Facility, via the pull-downs, and saving the page.

2) Dependent Actions: This section displays any Dependent (or Sub) Actions for the Action that is currently assigned and also displays empty prompts for any possible Sub-Actions that may be assigned from the current Action.

For example: If the current Action is Funeral Home Entry then this section would display the three possible Sub-Actions for that Action. If the current Action were Certify Death then only one Dependent Action (Pronounce Death) would be displayed. Blank potential Sub Actions in this section can be assigned to users and/or facilities and existing Sub-Actions can be re-assigned in the same manner as mentioned above. One additional feature of this section is the “Delete” checkbox. This allows a Sub Action to be
deleted – in other words, the owner of the parent Action wants to take back responsibility for that particular task.

3) Other Actions: This displays all other Actions for the death certificate which do not fall into one of the above two categories. This might be sister Actions to the current Action or other, non-related, Actions. This section is for information only since no rights are present for the current Action upon these other Actions.

For example, if the current Action were Certify Death, then this section would display the Parent Funeral Home Action and might also display a Cremation Authorization Action if one has been assigned by the Funeral Home. To complete the transfer after making the selection then pushing the “Save” button will send the responsibility for the selected action to the proper user.

Note: When the transfer action screen is accessed the bottom buttons will not be displayed to close the screen either select the “Save” or “Cancel” button in the lower right hand corner of the page. (These are not shown on the screen print.)

C. Action Transfer Screen:

Transfer Action Sub Screen

5. “Complete” When this button is pressed, the user is indicating that they believe they have completed all required data entry FOR THE CURRENT ACTION and that they wish to close it and pass control back to any parent Action.

The first thing this button does is to check the validation for the current Action. If the result is anything except a “pass” then the user is transferred to the “Validation Result” page just as
though they had pressed the “Validate” button. If the result is a “pass” then the current Action is closed and the user is transferred back to their original Welcome list, which will now no longer display this particular Action record.

If the completed Action was a Sub-Action (e.g. Certify Death) then next time the owner of the parent Action opens their record they will be able to see, by looking at the Action Transfer Page, that the Certify Death Action has been completed.

If an attempt is made to complete an Action that has incomplete Sub-Actions, then the user will be informed that the Sub-Actions must be completed first.

If the Completed Action is for Funeral Home Entry the death certificate is assigned a File Number, a “State Death Validation” Action is created and control passes to the Client Server system.

6. “Print ART Form”: This allows the ART for to be printed.

D. Decedent Tab

1. Decedent Personal Information: includes name, gender, date of birth, date of death, and Social Security Number.

2. Place of Death: Most of this information will be completed on the ART Tab. Changing the information here will change the same data on the ART Tab.

The place of death must occur in Montana and must be in a Montana County. **Never** select “Other” for the county for towns that are located in multiple counties (i.e. the county line goes through the center of town.) If this occurs, select the county where the death occurred and use “other” in the City or town field to input the town.

3. Calendars: From this point forward when a date is required pops up calendars are available for the date field. To activate the calendar click on the icon to the right of the field this will display a Month calendar of the current month. To move ahead or back a month click on the single arrow
“<” “>” to month ahead or back a full year click on the Double Arrows “<< “>>”. Once the user is at the desire month clicking on the desired day will populate the field and close the calendar.

4. Additional Information: This is to gather information about the decedent’s marital status and Education accomplishments. The “Marital Status” pull down menu has six options: Never married, Married but separated, Widowed, Divorced, Married, and Unknown. If married or married but separated is selected the surviving spouse information including the wife’s maiden name must be completed.

The education is for the highest degree obtained during the decedent’s life. Above are the selections available from the education pull down menu.
5. Race and Hispanic Submenu The two buttons, “View/ Select Race” and “View/ Select Hispanic Origin”, at the bottom of the screen open submenus.

**Race:** This allows the selection of as many races as applicable simply by clicking on the check boxes. If further clarification is needed a warning that the other box must be completed is displayed.
Race Submenu

Hispanic Origin Submenu: is used to report the Hispanic origin of the decedent.

E. Birth/Residence Tab

1. Birth Information: The birth date information should be already entered. If the date is changed, it will change the date of birth in other locations. Selection of the “Birth country” will display a listing of other countries (it is defaulted to the USA). Selection of birth state will allow the counties in that state to be listed, if the city is known, typing part of the city name will display a list all the cities beginning with that selection and when the correct city is selected the “County” field is also populated. If at anytime something is not listed, other can be used and the Specify blocks are used.
2. Decedents Residence Address: On this page a short cut can be used if the zip code is in the state of Montana. Putting the zip code in the “Residence Zip Code” field and pressing the City/County button will populate those the “Residence City” and “Residence County” fields. This also has the same partial city feature as birth information. That is if a partial city is typed and the city selected the county field will be populated.

3. Occupational History: These are literal fields for the predominant occupation. **DO NOT ENTER RETIRED.**

4. Parents: Enter the parents’ names’, if the either parent’s name is not known the enter “Unknown” in the last name

E. **Informant Tab**

At the top of the form notice the two short cuts available, if the “Informant is spouse”, selecting the option will populate the informant fields. Selecting of the “Informant address is Residence address” button will populate the address fields. Therefore selecting the two buttons will complete the screen. If the information is different the fields will need to be completed the address fields work as in the previous tab. The zip code, state, county and city buttons work the same as the Birth/Residence tab.
F. **Disposition Tab:**

1. **Disposition Information:** This information is a repeat of the information on the ART Tab. It should be already populated. Changing information on this tab will change the information on the ART Tab.

2. **Funeral Facility Information:** This information is a repeat of the information on the ART Tab. It should be already populated. Changing information on this tab will change the information on the ART Tab.

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H. **Certifier Tab:**

1. **Cause of Death Information, Manner of Death**

   **Part I:** These are literal fields in which the certifier will type the causes of death as done now on the paper copy, one feature that will be added is a link to a medical dictionary. The Onset boxes are for the duration of time from the onset of the condition to death.

   **Part II:** This is a literal box used to list any other significant conditions contributing to the death. It has a maximum of 240 characters.

2. **Manner of Death:** Pull down selection to the six choices for a manner of death: If pending Investigation is selected, then even after the certification is completed and submitted to the State, the certificate will remain on the certifier’s home page. When the manner and cause
are determined, the certifier will be able to change the cause and manner and submit the correction directly to the State.

3. **Injury:** This is to gather additional information about a death when it was caused by or involved an injury or accident. Selecting “No” to the question “Did death involve an injury of any kind?” will move the cursor to the date of death on the pronouncing section. This screen uses many of the features already described.
The “Place of Injury” and “If traffic accident” questions will offer the following pull down options.

4. Pronouncing Person and Certifier

**Pronouncing Person:** If the person who pronounced the death is different from the cause of death certifier, the certificate will need to be transferred to the Pronouncer. The transfer record button does this. There are several short cuts. Pressing, “Current user is Pronouncer” will populate the data. If the current user is transcribing the information then the “Date Signed (if transcribed)” will need to be entered. The coroner notification is used whenever the manner of death warrants coroner involvement. This will not electronically notify the coroner. The notification must be done verbally. In the future, the program may be modified to automatically notify the coroner when certain criteria are met.
Certifier: In the first block the certifier must identify what role in the certification they are assuming for example, they may be certifying the cause of death only or they may be pronouncing and certifying. The options for this block are as follows.

If the current user is the certifier, selection of the button will complete everything except the date certified. The tab may be completed be someone other than the certifier as will be the case when the certifier does not have access to the system. In these cases, the funereal director will be able to transcribe the cause of death information and complete the certificate. When transcribed, entering the certifier’s license number will populate the certifier’s name field. When the certification tab is completed the certifier will select the button, this will run the certifier tab through a validation if there are no errors the record will either be returned to the controlling funeral home or the following warning will appear:

Selecting “Cancel” will stop the filing and the funeral home will retain control, with the selection of “OK” the record is filed and the following confirmation message appears:
I. Validation Results

When either the “Validate” or the “Complete” buttons are selected, the program activates a series of checks that must be completed before the certificate is filed. All of the errors that are found are listed in the “Warning!” section. These tests will be run anew each time the “Validate” or “Complete” button is selected. If there are errors, clicking on the error will return the user to the field that is wrong.

When the record does pass the validation, the action detail will look like this:
J. Print Certificates

Selecting the Print Certificates tab opens a printing option menu. To print from this menu, the system requires "Adobe Reader software. This can be downloaded from the Adobe website at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html. There are three options: File Copy, HIPPA Copy, and Art Form.

Selection of the “File Copy MT Certificate of Death” Print/View will generate the following:

Note: This is a print of the certificate before it is filed; note the missing State file number.
PART IV Query

1. Query Death Cert: To view a certificate that has been filed use the query Death Cert function on left side the home page.

Selecting “Query Death Cert” on the “Home Page” will bring up the page above; this is used to search for a previously completed record or for an incomplete.

2. Query Search Results

When the results are returned the screen is as below. These searches are a like search so every variation of the name will be returned. Note in the example above the search was for “Jones: Yet the first return if for “Janich”. This is so that if the name were misspelled then it would most likely be returned.
3. **Query View Only**

If the record is still owned by the user, selecting the last name will allow the requestor to print or view the certificate. Note that all of the fields are grayed out preventing the record from being changed.
Appendix A: Common Screens

Common Screens - These are screens that are used throughout the process. The content of these screens is usually dependent on data entered in another field. For example, the selection of a county will limit the selections on City, Town, or location screen.

1. County (Montana)

![Counties of State MONTANA](image1)

2. County (another State)

![Counties of State ARIZONA](image2)
3. Facility: Note the “Show All Counties” option.

4. Place of Disposition
5. Funeral Facility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HACKER-ANDERSON MORTUARY</td>
<td>Funeral Facility</td>
<td>HELENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELENA FUNERAL CHAPEL</td>
<td>Funeral Facility</td>
<td>HELENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETZ FUNERAL HOME</td>
<td>Funeral Facility</td>
<td>HELENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COMPUTER TRAINING CENTER</td>
<td>Funeral Facility</td>
<td>HELENA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>