

# Montana Vital Statistics Services

## Index Files

### Description

Death index files are the most frequently requested index furnished by the Office of Vital Records. Index files are a line listing of select content from vital records issued in Montana. Typical uses of the Death Index File are to remove decedents from charitable or for-profit mailing lists, voter registrations rolls, healthcare medical records, banking records and for use by organizations for purposes of fraud detection and/or prevention.

Index Files for other vital events occurring in Montana are also available. Since state laws regarding the release of this information differ for each type of vital event, please contact the [Vital Statistics Analysis Unit](#) for details on obtaining other index files.

Index Files are provided electronically using the [State of Montana File Transfer Service](#). Instructions for creating an account can be found on their [webpage](#). Generally customers request files as an Excel spreadsheet or plain text file although other file formats are available. Clients may choose from the following list of items to create a death index file specific for their needs:

- Last Name
- First Name
- Middle Name
- Suffix
- Resident Address 1<sup>st</sup> Line
- Resident Address 2<sup>nd</sup> Line
- City of Residence
- State of Residence
- County of Residence
- Zip Code
- Death Date
- Birth Date
- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Marital Status
- Education
- SSN
- Country of Birth
- State of Birth
- Place of Death Facility Name
- City of Town of Death
- County of Occurrence
- Decedents Usual Occupation
- Type of Industry/Business
- Father First Name
- Fathers Middle Name
- Fathers Last Name
- Mothers Last Name
- Mothers Maiden

## **Fees**

The cost of each index file is \$50. Customers may request to receive index files on an ongoing basis either monthly or quarterly or request monthly or annual files as needed. Customers electing to receive monthly or quarterly index files are invoiced in December for the following years' worth of files while all other files are invoiced at the time of the request. Payment must be received prior to the release of the index file.

### *Example of Fees*

A client orders death index files for all of 2019. They are invoiced \$300 in December. That is, \$50 per file X 12 months = \$600. If a client ordered a quarterly index files for 2019; it would be \$200 or \$50 X 4 quarters.

## **How to order**

Contact the [Vital Statistics Analysis Unit](#) either by phone or email.

Please provide us your name or the name that should appear on the invoice, phone number and email address, your business' federal tax payer identification number, and your mailing address. Invoices may take up to two weeks to arrive.

## **Custom Aggregate Statistics**

### **Description**

The Vital Statistics Analysis Unit produces many different types of aggregate statistics which are freely available on our [website](#) or through our online interactive query system, [MT-IBIS](#). In addition to these resources, the Vital Statistics Analysis Unit also produces custom aggregate statistics to meet our client's specific needs or interests.

Custom aggregate statistics are available for all vital records; birth, death, fetal death, induced abortion, marriage, and divorce certificates. Examples of statistics commonly requested are mortality rates, birth rates, and suicide rates using different combinations of variables, years, or age-groups not available elsewhere. Federal and state laws as well as departmental policies apply to all data releases which may limit the availability or level of detail we are able to provide.

### **Fees**

The fee for producing aggregate statistics is \$50 per hour for programming and processing if that processing that's more than half an hour's work on existing programs. The cost will be estimated before the programming is performed and the charge will not exceed the estimate.

### **How to Order**

Contact the [Vital Statistics Analysis Unit](#) either by phone or email.

Please provide us your name or the name that should appear on the invoice, phone number and email address, and your mailing address. Invoices may take up to two weeks to arrive.

## **Data for Public Health Research**

### **Description**

The Vital Statistics Analysis Unit provides record-level data and certificates for investigations designed to primarily to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. For example, researchers involved in human studies may use the [National Death Index](#) to obtain a list of deceased research participants which they then use to request data and death certificates from our files. Other academics may be interested in linking death records with different datasets to answer complex public health questions that could not be addressed using vital records alone. Research agreements are required for the above cases and any other use that may identify a person of institution named in a vital record or report.

### **Fees**

There are no fees associated with the evaluation of a completed research agreement but fees are assessed for producing a dataset, record searches, and providing informational copies of death certificates. Fees must be paid prior to the release of any data.

#### *Programming and Processing*

The fee for producing aggregate statistics is \$50 per hour for programming and processing if that processing that's more than half an hour's work on existing programs. The cost will be estimated before the programming is performed and the charge will not exceed the estimate.

#### *Record Searches*

If we are provided with a list of decedents, the fee is \$10 per name for a record search within any period of five-years or less. If the record is not located, the fee will not be refunded. If the request is for more than five years, an additional fee if \$1 per year over the first five years will be charged.

#### *Informational copies of a death certificate*

The fee for an informational copy of a death certificate is \$13.

#### *Example of fees*

The Vital Statistics Analysis Unit (VSAU) receives a completed research agreement and approves the request. Researchers have include 5 names obtained from the National

Death Index and are requesting informational copies of the certificates, if available. VSAU is able to find 4 out of 5 names during the record search and assesses the following fees: \$13 for each of the 4 records retrieved ( $\$13 \times 4 = \$52$ ) and retains \$13 as a search fee for the one record we were unable to locate. In total, this request would cost \$65 ( $\$52 + \$13 = \$65$ ).

## **How to Order**

Contact the [Vital Statistics Analysis Unit](#) to obtain the research packet. Completed packets may be returned by mail, scanned and emailed for items under 4 Mb, or sent through our states File Transfer Service—available after creating an [ePass](#) account with the State of Montana.

Office of Epidemiology and Scientific Support  
c/o Vital Statistics Analysis Unit  
PO BOX 202951  
Helena, MT 59620-5951

The research packet consists of the data use agreement, research application, and release of public health information forms. In addition to the signed application and data use agreement, we will require copies of your study protocol, Institutional Review Board Determination, Policies and Procedures related to data storage and destruction, and any other relevant information that would assist us in evaluating your request.

Once we receive the completed packet will we review it for completeness and its scientific content. This may take several weeks depending on staff availability or if questions arise during the evaluation that require obtaining a legal opinion.

Fees will be assessed for all approved research agreements as described above. Please provide us your name or the name that should appear on the invoice, phone number and email address, and your mailing address. Invoices may take up to two weeks to arrive.