




Eric J. Holcomb  
*Governor*

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG  
*State Health Commissioner*

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 5, 2021

**To:** Funeral Directors, Medical Certifiers, County Coroners, and Local Health Officers

**From:** D. Shane Hatchett  Chief of Staff  
Tasha L. Smith  
*Acting State Registrar and Director, Vital Records*

**Subject:** VR Memo 2021-03 – Recission of VR Memo 2021-01

On January 6, 2021, this office issued VR Memo 2021-01 establishing a process for funeral directors to work with county coroners to release a body for cremation without a registered death certificate. This special dispensation is no longer necessary since the vital records system, DRIVE, is functioning and stabilized. Moreover, user issues are now being promptly resolved and death certificates are routinely being issued within statutory timeframes.

Therefore, since the exigent circumstances are no longer present, VR Memo 2021-01 is hereby rescinded effective Saturday, May 1, 2021 at midnight. After that time, a cremation should occur only after a death record is fully registered or the coroner has issued a waiver for a coroner's case. (IC 23-14-31-27)

Physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants are required to certify the medical information on the death record within five (5) days of certification being requested. (IC 16-37-1-3.1(e)(2))

A copy of the rescinded memorandum is appended here for reference.

Important resources and user guides for DRIVE can be located at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/drive>.

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To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers.



**Indiana  
Department  
of  
Health**




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*Governor*

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*State Health Commissioner*

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 6, 2020

**To:** County Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Local Health Officers

**From:** D. Shane Hatchett, Chief of Staff  Hilari Sautbine, JD, State Registrar and Director, Vital Records

**Subject:** VR Memo 2021-01 - Coroner's Jurisdiction for Deaths and Cremation Release

Due to the exigent circumstances of the current public health emergency and to prevent undue hardship upon the family of the deceased or funeral director, a County Coroner can discuss the death with the physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse to determine the appropriateness of cremation after reviewing the circumstances of death (IC 23-14-31-27(a)(3)). If cremation is authorized, the County Coroner shall complete the attached form or a substantially similar form in their medical examiner system.

The Authorization for Disposition of Remains form does not replace the death certificate. A death certificate must be certified by the physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse last in attendance (IC 16-37-3-3). In the event that a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse is unable to certify the death certificate, a local health officer is permitted to obtain sufficient information to determine cause of death and shall then certify the record (IC 16-37-3-6).

Questions about this guidance or DRIVE can be directed to [DRIVE@isdh.in.gov](mailto:DRIVE@isdh.in.gov).

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## AUTHORIZATION FOR DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

Name of Deceased		Case #	Date Received	Time Released	
Date of Death	Time of Death	Sex	Race	Date of Birth	Age
Address of Deceased		City	State	Zip	
Date of Death	Time of Death	Location of Death			
Funeral Home		Funeral Home Address			
Funeral Home Representative		Funeral Home	City	State	Zip
Autopsy Requested? ___ YES ___ NO	Autopsy Performed? ___ YES ___ NO	Where Autopsy Performed		Doctor Performing Autopsy	
Cause of Death		Manner of Death	Mechanism of Death		
Person Certifying Death		Permission to Dispose of Remains ___ Yes ___ NO		Type of Disposition	

Authorized Signature of Coroner's Office

\_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature of Coroner's Office

\_\_\_\_\_

Title

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Authorized