

Quick Guide to West Virginia Death Records

- Prior to 1853:** deaths not recorded.
- 1853–1916:** deaths recorded at the county level only. No statewide index exists. Originals are in the county courthouses, with a few original records located in the West Virginia University West Virginia and Regional History Collection. Records microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) are available in the West Virginia Archives and History Library and elsewhere. Digitized images from the microfilm are available in a free searchable online database, West Virginia Vital Research Records (WVRR), http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_select.aspx.
- 1853–1860:** some duplicate county records are preserved on Library of Virginia microfilm, available in the Archives and History Library and elsewhere.
- 1917–1969:** as of 2020, all state death certificates for 1917 through the currently eligible year (present year minus 51 years) are available free online in the WVRR database; as uncertified copies from the Archives and History Library with a \$2.50 statutory fee; or as certified copies from the Vital Registration office with a \$12.00 fee. (Note that each January another year of state death records will be added, such as 1970 in January 2021.) Digitized images of actual county death records for selected counties for this time period are available in the searchable WVRR database, and original records are available in the county courthouses. A microfilmed statewide annual index is available in the Archives and History Library.
- 1970–1973:** all state death certificates for these years are available as uncertified copies from the Archives and History Library with a \$2.50 statutory fee each, or as certified copies from the Vital Registration office with a \$12.00 fee each. A microfilmed statewide annual index is available in the Archives and History Library. The county records are available in the county courthouses and are available on microfilm approximately up to the year each county's records were filmed, usually 1968–1971. (For a listing of county records available on microfilm in the Archives and History Library, go to <http://www.wvculture.org/history/countrec.html> and click on the county name.)
- 1974 to present:** all state death certificates for these years are available only as certified copies from the Vital Registration office with a \$12.00 fee. A microfilmed statewide annual index is available in the Archives and History Library up through 1991. The county records are available in the county courthouses. Neither county nor state death records for this time period are available on GSU microfilm or through the Archives and History Library.

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See *West Virginia Archives and History News*, Vol. VIII, No. 7 (September 2007) for full article. Available at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/ahnews.html>.