Guide to Death Indexes

Death registrations for deaths that occurred more than 50 years ago from the date of death are available at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Go to death indexes

Locating and requesting a Death Registration

Registration records are not available in the Sandra Thomson's Reading Room or online. You will need to search for a **registration number** to request a record through our online payment system.

1. Using a **death index**, select the first letter of the surname.
2. Scroll through the index to find the year the person died to locate their name and registration number.

   The death indexes between 1925-1972 are keyword searchable. Press *ctrl+f* on PC or *command+f* on Mac to keyword search for the name of the person that you are looking for.

3. Request and pay for your Vital Statistics record by completing a **Vital Statistics Request**

If you are looking for a record less than 50 years old, contact a registry agent.

Vital statistics death indexes and use

Vital statistic indexes are yearly summaries of vital events that contain basic information such as name, location, year, and registration number. The indexes are used to locate registrations.

The following death registrations are located using a handwritten index:

- Deaths, 1877-1950
    - o These indexes overlap between 1925-1950 with Deaths, 1925-1972, indexes. If a record is not found in this index, check the Deaths, 1925-1972, indexes.

- Deaths, 1973 & onwards
    - o These indexes are handwritten.

- Indigenous death indexes, 1923-1945
    - o Between 1923-1945, some Indigenous deaths were indexed separately.
    - o If you are unable to find a record, check the other death indexes.

- Overseas death indexes, 1940-1948
    - o Between 1940-1948 Alberta who died overseas while serving in World War II were indexed under Overseas Deaths.
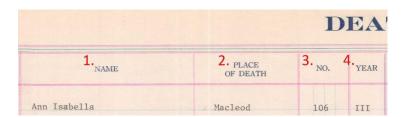
These death indexes are organized alphabetically by surname and then by year. Each letter is then further subdivided according to the first vowel instance in the surname,

- i.e., Aa, Ae, Ai, Ao, Au; Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu, and so on.

For example,

- Andrews will be found under Ae; McLean will be found under McE; Smith will be found under Si, and so on.
- If there is no distinction between Mc and Mac, both will be together under one label.
- 'Y' is not considered a vowel. If the name Hyde, for example, is not found under "He", check "Ha," "Hi," "Ho," or "Hu."

Here is an index example for the years prior to 1898:

1. Name
2. Place of Death
3. Registration Number
4. Year

In the above example, **Ann Isabella** died in **Macleod** in **year III** and her registration number is **106**. Prior to 1917, Vital Statistics used letters or roman numerals to indicate a year. Please see this list for determining what letter links to the year of your event:

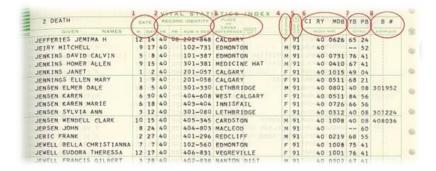| Year	Code	Year	Code	Year	Code
Up to 1897	II / III	1904	G	1911	O
1898	A	1905	H	1912	P
1899	B	1906	J	1913	Q
1900	C	1907	K	1914	R
1901	D	1908	L	1915	S
1902	E	1909	M	1916	T
1903	F	1910	N		

The following death registrations are located using a typed index:

- Death, 1925-1972

    o These indexes overlap between 1925-1950 with Deaths, 1877-1950, indexes. If a record is not found in this index, check the Deaths, 1877-1950, indexes.

These indexes have optical character recognition (OCR), which means that they are keyword searchable. Although the indexes include more information about the event, only the name, date, registration number, and location are needed to locate the record. **All information provided in the indexes is also located, in more detail, in the registration record.**

Here is an example from a 1940 death index and how to read it:

How to read the coding:

Code		Meaning
1. Date	M/Day	Month/Day of Event
2. Record Identity	YR	Year of Event
	PB	Province/Country Code
	NUM*BER	Registration Number
3. Place or Cross Reference		Place of event or information that may cross-reference the event
4. Sex of Deceased		F - Female
		M – Male
5. Ctl		Unknown
6. Maiden Name	CI	Unknown
	RY	Year event was registered
	MDB	Month and day of birth of deceased
7. Initials	YB	Year of birth of deceased
	PB	Place of birth of deceased (country or province code)
8. Birthplace	B#	Alberta birth registration number for deceased

Death indexes not available on the website

Death records are available 50 years from the date of the event. Indexes are not made available until all the events from a year can be accessed. To request a record from this year, please contact the Reading Room archivist.

Unable to locate a death record

If the record is not found in the indexes, it may not have been registered with the Government of Alberta.

If the marriage was performed by a faith organization, they might have a record of the event. The Provincial Archives has registers for some faith organization, **Faith Organizations | Provincial Archives of Alberta**. Roman Catholic sacramental records are not found at the Provincial Archives. For Indigenous communities, however, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) kept an index of **baptisms, marriages and burials** that occurred in their churches (see the **OMI fonds** for more information).

Form Information

Death and stillbirth records often included information related to the form that would have assisted those completing the form to fill it out correctly. Please see **this link** for samples of what the form information looked like over the range of years that the Provincial Archives of Alberta can provide access to.