SENSITIVE - NOT TO BE SHARED WITH PUBLIC

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Effective Dates: 07/22/2026 - Present (View History) TN 115 (07-26)

GN 02602.055 If an Individual Deceased on SSA Records is Alive

A. Overview of incorrect death records

Incorrect death records are very sensitive because an incorrect death in Social Security Administration (SSA) records can result in severe financial hardship and distress; individuals may lose Medicare, State Buy-In, Medicaid, assistance based on SSI, private insurance coverage, or experience other difficulties. We **must** assist individuals to obtain proof of identity (ID), remove the death information from the Numident, and reinstate any benefits due as quickly as possible. Individuals may also need our help to verify their situation with medical, social, banking, mortgage, or other services. Always offer to provide a letter to the individual to help resolve their situation with these entities. For samples, see Exhibits Notice Language for Erroneous Death Cases GN 00304.115 .

B. Incorrect death records caused by an administrative error

An administrative error is created when SSA processes a legitimate report of death for the wrong person by using the wrong SSN or BIC. In most cases, the individual will initiate contact with the agency by phone or in-office visit to correct the record. If you have definitive proof (e.g. a miskeyed SSN) that an administrative error caused the individuals incorrect death record, they do not need to visit the office. In cases where you discover an administrative error prior to the individual contacting the agency, and you have clear proof that an administrative error caused the incorrect death report, you do not need to develop by phone, mail, or

through an in-office visit. These corrections can be input directly through DIPS as instructed in GN 02602.051 .

C. Incorrect death records caused by an erroneous death report

An erroneous death report is any error that is not administrative.

An erroneous death report is the cause of an incorrect death record when we process a report of death and later discover the report was erroneous.

Sources of erroneous death reports may be:

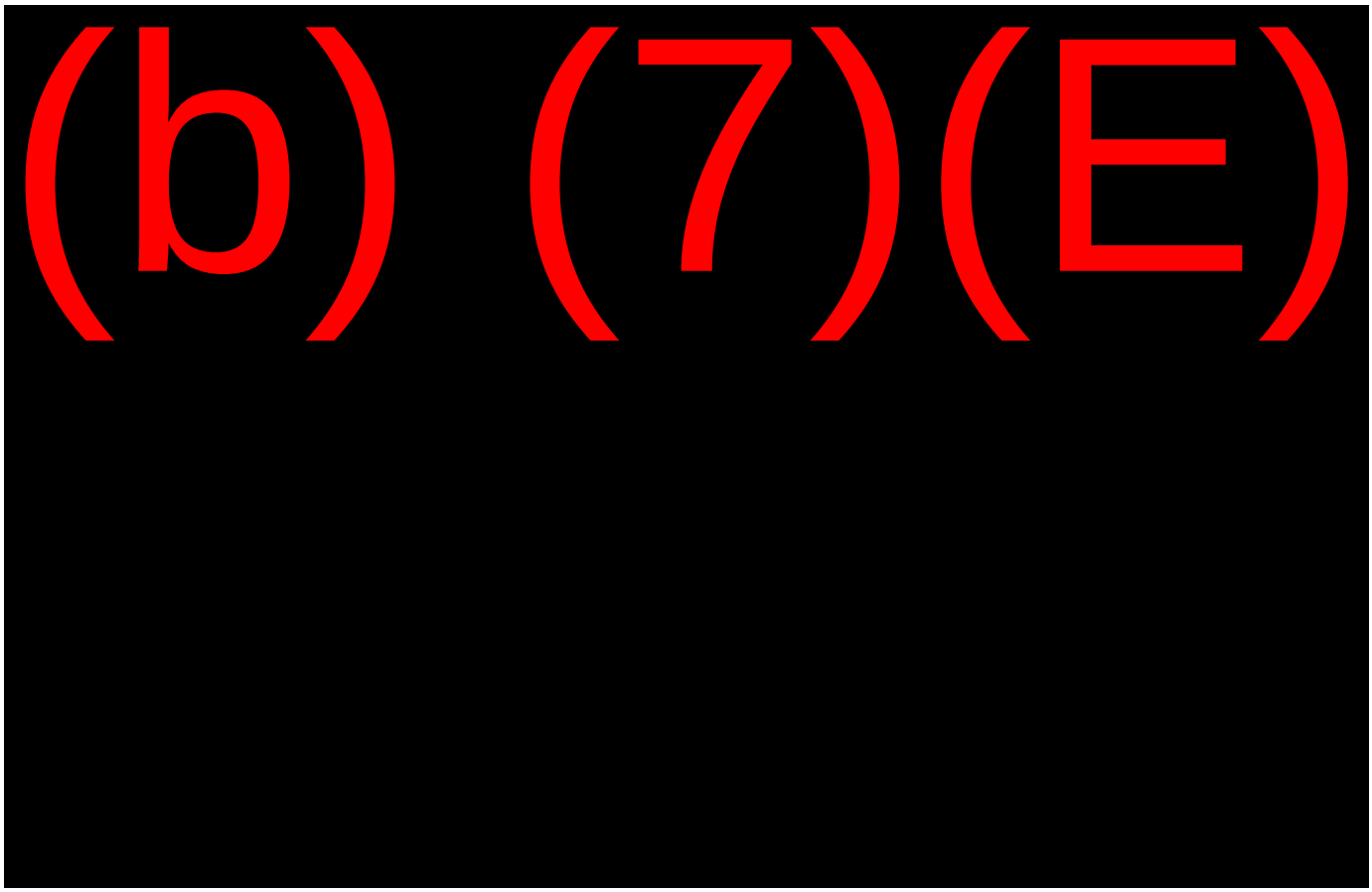
- A report of death from a representative payee, someone acting on behalf of the beneficiary, or a relative;
- An electronic report of death from the Department of the Treasury; and
- An electronic fund transfer (EFT) payment returned by a financial institution (FI) because there is a Death Notification Entry (DNE) on the account.

D. Proof of identity for resolving erroneous death reports

We require a face-to-face interview and proof of identity to correct an erroneous death report or when a response to a contact (direct contact, come-in letter, or due process letter) indicates the individual is alive. A representative payee, legal guardian or someone acting on behalf of the beneficiary may also provide proof of ID for the beneficiary. Limited exceptions to the face-to-face requirements are listed in GN 02602.055E in this section. When conducting the interview, use open-ended questions when talking to the individual. This means you **must** not disclose any identifying information or provide any other assistance or coaching in answering your questions. For information on documentation requirements and GN 02602.056C for information on conducting the interview see GN 02602.056B.

E. (b) (7)(E)





F. References

GN 00304.115 Exhibits Notice Language for Erroneous Death Cases

GN 00301.285 Statements and Other Documentation

GN 00301.287 How Evidence is Recorded on EVID and Report of Contact page in the Consolidated Claims Experience (CCE) in PE Situations

GN 02602.056 Procedure to Correct an Incorrect Death Record

Section History

Prior Versions of Section

Additional Information

Related Instructions

Link to this section:

(b) (7)(E)