



# Understanding Remote Attestation

Remote Attestation (RA) is a remote signature method for requesting medical certification of the causes of death utilizing a telephone (voice) or fax machine. The word “attestation” means to verify or confirm. Through the process of signing the Physician Attestation Copy (PAC) and faxing it back to CA-EDRS or by using the voice attest option, the physician is attesting to the accuracy of the causes of death that will appear on a decedent’s legal death certificate.

Fax Attestation is most commonly used. Voice Attestation will not be discussed in detail in this document.

## Medical Certifier’s Signature

The Medical Certifier’s attestation is the Physician’s name with the FAX Signature symbol, if attestation is by the fax method (Figure 1), or the VOICE Signature symbol, if attested by the voice method (Figure 2). Click on the blue icon next to the symbol to view the physician’s signature or hear the voice attestation.



Figure 1 – FAX attested



Figure 2 – VOICE attested

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## RA Workflow with Fax Attestation

1. Funeral home (FH) or Medical Facility (MF) staff completes the required medical information (MI) in EDRS.
2. Optional – Some Local Registration Districts may require MI Review approval before requesting Remote Attestation. Contact your Local Health Department for specific requirements.
3. Funeral home (FH) or Medical Facility (MF) staff requests Remote Attestation and enters the physician's fax number.
4. A fax packet is immediately generated and faxed to the physician fax number supplied by the requesting Funeral Home or Medical Facility user. The fax packet is generally sent in less than 5 minutes after request. However, several factors may cause delay including:
  - **Busy signal** – the fax will be re-sent in approximately 5 minutes for a maximum of 4 attempts. After the 4<sup>th</sup> failed attempt, the Help Desk is notified.
  - **No answer** - the fax will be re-sent in approximately 5 minutes for a maximum of 4 attempts. After the 4<sup>th</sup> failed attempt, the Help Desk is notified.
  - **Not a Fax machine** – a person's voice or voice mail answers - the fax will be re-sent in approximately 5 minutes for a maximum of 4 attempts. After the 4<sup>th</sup> failed attempt, the Help Desk is notified.
  - **Transmission error** – the receiving fax machine does not successfully communicate with the sending fax server - the fax will be re-sent in approximately 5 minutes for a maximum of 4 attempts. After the 4<sup>th</sup> failed attempt, the Help Desk is notified.
5. The physician's fax machine receives the fax. The time for the physician's fax machine to print the 2 page fax depends on the machine. Some are faster than others (2 to 10 minutes). However, several factors may cause delay including:
  - **Physician's Fax Machine out of paper** - the physician or office staff must refill the paper to resume receiving faxes.
  - **Physicians' Fax Machine not turned on**- the physician or office staff must turn the fax machine on to resume receiving faxes.
6. The physician receives the fax, reviews the PAC, signs the PAC, and faxes the PAC back to the toll free number. The length of time between when the physician receives the fax and when the physician faxes back the signed PAC depends on the physician's office. It may take minutes, hours, or days depending on the physician.

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7. After the physician faxes the signed PAC to the toll free number, and if the fax receiving system is able to read the incoming PAC, the image is saved and the EDRS record is updated to MC ATT (attested). The PAC is generally received, read, and the EDRS record status updated 15 - 20 minutes after being sent. However, several factors may cause delay including:
- **Wrong toll free number** – If the physician’s office sends the fax to the wrong number, it is never received.
  - **The fax contains more than a single page.** A fax coversheet and/or other pages were included with the PAC – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
  - **Unable to OCR or read the Fax/Auth #** - the Fax/Auth # is obscured, distorted, or cut off due to headers added when re-faxing the original packet – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
  - **Unable to detect a signature in field 115** – the physician did not sign or the signature is too light to be read – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
  - **Fax is skewed and/or distorted** – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
  - **Fax is too light or too dark** – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
  - **Part of the PAC has been cut off due to a header or footer added** when the original PAC is re-faxed by another sending fax machine – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
  - **Alterations or additional markings on the PAC** – the received fax will be sent to an exception queue where it can be manually processed by the Help Desk during business hours.
8. View the Fax Attestation Image by clicking on the blue fax icon in field 115. If the wrong physician has signed or if the physician has altered the PAC (made an addition or correction) the death certificate will be rejected by the Local Registration District. If the fax attestation image is not acceptable, contact your Local Registration District to unlock MI, make the corrections, and re-request RA.

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## Fax Authorization Number or “Token”

Each time Remote Attestation is requested, the token is incremented. The token for each PAC remains valid for 120 hours (5 days) from the time remote attestation was originally requested, that is to say, the Physician or Medical Certifier (MC) must sign and return the PAC within 120 hours, otherwise, the token for the PAC will expire. Once the token has expired the Funeral Home or Medical Facility staff must re-request Remote Attestation.

The last number of the token is for security purposes and is created randomly; therefore, it is impossible to determine what the last number will be until the request is made. However, the number that follows the record number (next to last) determines the number of times Remote Attestation has been requested (starting with zero).

The table below shows the token format and shows how it is incremented for record number **784544** after multiple requests.

Times Requested	Token Number
1 <sup>st</sup> Request	00784544 <b>0</b> 9
2 <sup>nd</sup> Request	00784544 <b>1</b> 3
3 <sup>rd</sup> Request	00784544 <b>2</b> 1
4 <sup>th</sup> Request	00784544 <b>3</b> 2

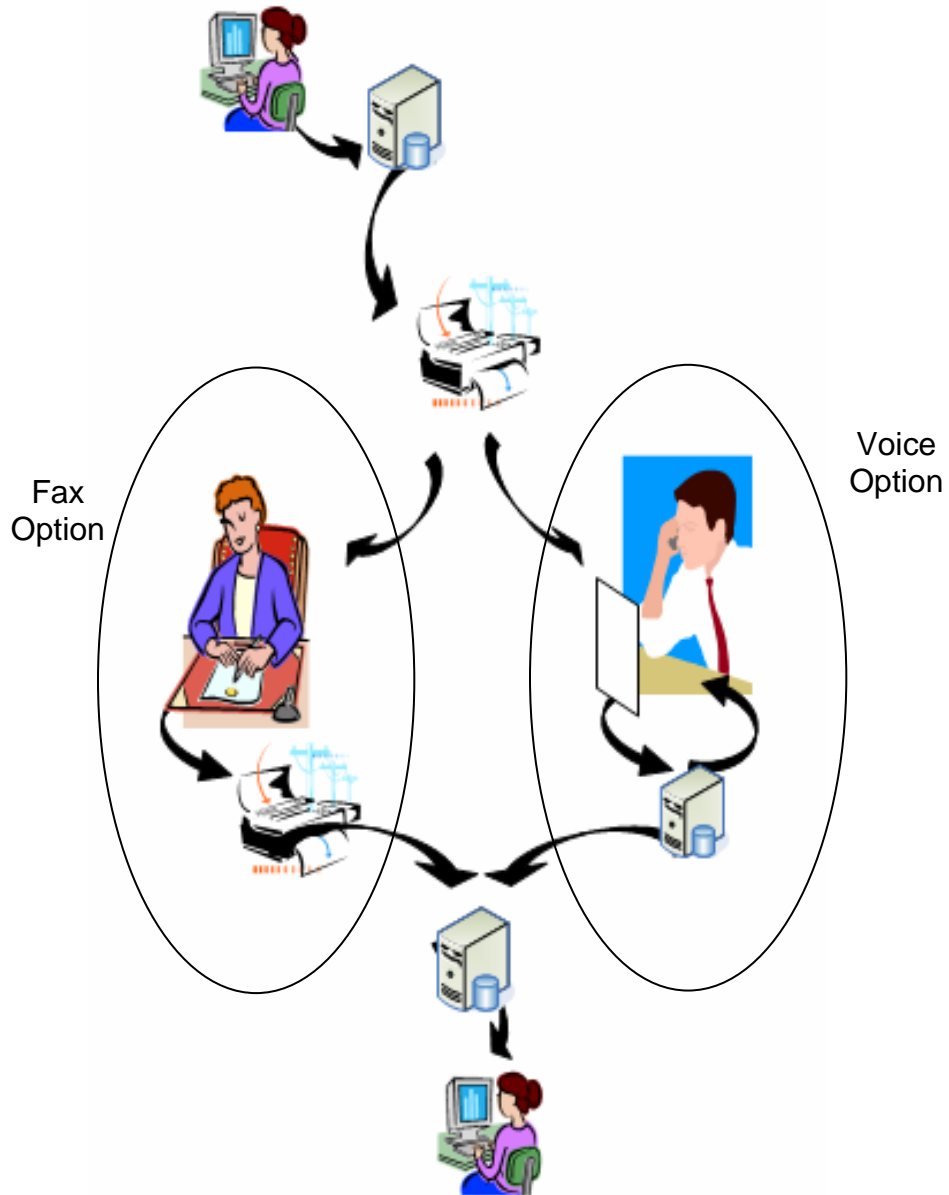


Figure 3 - Remote Attestation Workflow