

New online registration system for deceased estates at the Master's office

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What's new?

When advising your clients regarding deceased estates, it is important to remain informed about the latest developments from the Master's Office, to ensure compliance with estate reporting requirements. The Department of Justice and Correctional Services ("Department") officially launched the deceased estate online registration system on 10 October 2023. The new system is expected to be available nationally in January 2024. This new innovative technology empowers all parties to engage more effectively with the Master's office. Among the various advantages, the new registration system offers South Africans a convenient and efficient means of conducting business with the Master's office remotely, even in the comfort of their home.

Several challenges experienced over the years, has led to the development of the Deceased Estates online registration system. These included having to turn clients away due to incomplete paperwork, document mishandling and manual processes that cause delays. With the new system, clients can register*, verify their relationship with the deceased and report the estate. This can be done simply by completing the necessary forms automatically generated for upload, upon successful registration. Depending on the value of the estate, a *letter of executorship* or *letter of authority* is issued to the interested party through the chosen method of communication, streamlining the deceased estate reporting process.

*Parties who may register the deceased estate using the online system:

1. An individual, in their individual capacity and related to the deceased.
2. Legal practitioners who act on behalf of their clients.
3. Banking industry and fiduciary professionals.
4. Accountants.

Safeguarding client information and verification process

Clients can rest assured that the online system involves human intervention. On the front end, when data is submitted, it is securely stored in the digital cloud. At the back end, an estate controller validates the information for accuracy and completeness before issuing a *letter of authority*. A Quick Response (QR) code is embedded in the letter of authority, allowing verification and validation of appointment letters and their current status at the Master's office. Additionally, the information of the person or relative registering the deceased estate, is cross verified with the Department of Home Affairs, legal practice councils, and CIPC records. Also read: [Safeguarding your clients and your practice against current fraud trends.](#)

The Department highlights the following advantages of the online registration system for deceased estates in streamlining service delivery:

ENHANCED ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The online deceased estates system aims to bring services closer and speedily to clients across the country thereby enhancing access to justice.

MODERNISATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Online Deceased Estate Registration system is part of the Department's strategy to introduce online service channels to improve access to justice and improve the efficiency with which services are provided.

GREATER CONVENIENCE FOR THE PUBLIC

The objective of the online system is to enable South Africans to transact with the Masters' offices from anywhere, anytime and in a cost-effective manner with quicker turn-around times.

QUICKER REGISTRATION PROCESS

Online registrations will speed up the registration process and ensure quicker availability of the details/particulars of the beneficiaries and trustees.

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The Department anticipates that the implementation of the online system will significantly reduce the volume of complaints received by Masters Offices.

REDUCTION OF QUEUES

It is expected that the online system will significantly cut the long queues at master's offices as there will be no need for customers to physically visit Masters' offices and service points.

PUBLIC WILL SAVE ON TRAVEL COSTS

There will be no need for people to travel long distances to access Masters Services. The online system will allow members of the public to register deceased estates either in the comfort of their homes, offices or anywhere in the world without having to visit a master's Office (except with the lodgment of original wills).

ELECTRONIC BOOKING OF APPOINTMENTS

Where a client needs to physically visit a Masters Office, they will choose a suitable date and time slot for their appointment. The system will display the available slots, allowing them to pick one that aligns with their schedule. Clients will also be able to receive status updates of their applications via SMS or email depending on their chosen method of communication.

ROLLOUT OF SERVICE KIOSKS

Self-service and staff assisted kiosks will be set up at all Masters Offices to enable clients to report estates online with or without the assistance of legally trained personnel. These will be used by those who do not have access to technologies such as smart phones, computers or data. Staff assisted kiosks will also enable the elderly and any members of the public who may not be tech savvy to receive service from the Masters.

Source: <https://www.justice.gov.za/master/deceased-how.html>

Click [here](#) for more details on deceased estates.

[Access the Masters' online registration system for deceased estates.](#)

For support or further enquiries, email DojDEOnlineSupport@justice.gov.za

References:

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