

While the Death Master File may provide information that can be misused, it is not reasonable to deny the information it contains to legitimate requestors. Terminating all access is akin to saying that because some teenager has huffed (inhaled with the intent to get high) spray paint, I may not purchase some Rustoleum to touch up my barbeque grill, even though a) I have a legitimate use, and b) I'm 57 years of age.

Reasons to find ways to prevent abuse rather than terminate all access include:

- The information contained in the Death Master File is crucial to genealogical searches by individuals interested in tracking down their ancestors.
- The information being misused is not the fault of the Social Security Administration, but rather that of malicious third parties.
- Eliminating access to the Death Master File will not eliminate identity theft; accessing state and local death records by those intent on malfeasance won't be impacted by restricting or eliminating access to the Death Master File. Information on how to obtain fake identities is readily available in books and online.
- Erroneous reports of individuals' deaths can be resolved by tasking SSA personnel with double-checking provided information; this prevents malicious as well as accidental erroneous reports. Failing to check information is probably the biggest flaw in the system by far.

The information in the Master Death Record should be able to be accessed by the public through legitimate genealogical and governmental agencies and restricted to those with legitimate reason for accessing the information. If someone is later found to have misused that information, fine them or refuse further access, but don't penalize everyone for the actions of a few bad actors. Abuse of the data doesn't justify total access elimination; after all, people write in library books, fail to return them, or accrue excessive book fines without libraries being shut down en masse due to 'abuse'.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration in your deliberations.

Karen Isaacson
Woodinville, WA 98077-7808