



Below are some of the FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) of the International Deceased Resolution Standards and the DeathCenter.com website. Please use the website contact form for questions.

What are the International Deceased Resolution Standards?

The International Deceased Resolution Standards are a comprehensive set of actions to resolve the affairs of the deceased. They were started around the end of 2016 and the first release was completed at the end of 2020. The IDRS team sought out to make a universal list of ‘everything’ that anyone might need to do when ‘anyone’ passed away. The reference to anyone was in recognition of the enormity of variants regarding people and their affairs. The initial release has 100 questions (variants), with 72 core questions with details (items) along with another 28 less common questions. These questions serve as qualifiers or inclusion gates for the items (sets of tasks). These items comprise the IDRS, and this first release has 940 items as possibilities of things ‘to do’ to close the affairs of a deceased person. The IDRS is a structured numerical classification system where the assignment of numbers for items (or letters for the questions) facilitates conversations, provides a focus for learning and knowledge and permits creating a repository of best practices, tools or forms for which to complete the tasks required. Much like the tax code, the Dewey Decimal system or animal classifications, having this structure provides many benefits to be derived in addressing an incredibly diverse and complicated set of tasks. In operation, a user would answer all of the questions, and most likely the majority of the items would be shown to be not applicable to the deceased in question. And within the list of items of each question they answered ‘yes’ to, are also items that would be deemed not applicable as well. Example, if the question regarding vehicles was responded to positively, and had 23 items under it, but the deceased did not own a boat, plane or motorcycle, all of the items relating to those would also be considered not applicable. The IDRS was set up as a two tier flat structure (questions and items), as there proved to be a very complicated decision tree hierarchy. To facilitate usefulness, the team focused on defining the bottom tier items and then ensuring that a binary inclusion question would allow a user to quickly include or exclude those things which could be relevant to their deceased. With this two-step process, the original 940 might first become (example) 315 (after the 100 questions were answered), and then possibly finally 174 (example) items to review and act on (as the 315 were reviewed individually for relevance).

What are the IDRS Item numbers?

The IDRS item numbers are the official designation for that specific resolution item, so as to facilitate discussion and focus in their closure. These will be published every year for additions and changes, but the numbers will never change, allowing continuity for supporting tools and information. The existing Item Numbers may be impacted by deletion, merging or splitting. One of the major objectives was to create a numbering system that would remain stable in perpetuity.

What are the Questions?

The Questions are qualifiers to determine the relevance of groups of specific items, providing for an efficient method of including or excluding those items for consideration in closing out the affairs of a deceased person. They will be included in the IDRS to assist with understanding, but the IDRS core is the Items and their designated numbers.



What were seen as the major challenges in resolving the affairs of a deceased person?

This process was universally seen as a challenge to all we spoke that had done it, except for in cases where it was setup in advance to not be. There were four major challenges seen with respect to providing assistance for the resolution of the affairs of the deceased.

- (1) Understanding the entirety of possible things which may be required;
- (2) Determining which apply to your particular situation;
- (3) Obtaining the knowledge of exactly what would need to be accomplished to resolve the affairs of a deceased individual;
- (4) Coordinating all of the activities and establish when actions have been completed.

The two level structure of the IDRS supports solving the first two challenges, and the fourth can be tracked far more easily given the numerical structure. There is a free mobile application called HeirList which allows a user to complete many of the functions discussed.

Will it allow for new items to be added or other revisions?

The IDRS was also created to be a ‘living’ list as its goal is to capture everything that could possibly be required to be completed upon the death of an individual. At least once a year, the feedback and new items will be discussed, and then incorporated where it makes sense. The website that hosts the released lists, deathcenter.com (also death.org as an easier site to remember forwarding website) has a public feedback mechanism to capture everyone’s ideas. The 5 major actions for items are: edit, add, remove, split or combine. In addition, we welcome suggestions of completely new questions. With the starting 100, we believe we have a very good comprehensive start, but the goal of the IDRS is to capture and document everything. The first release is expected to generate a lot of discussion and disagreement, and a conscious decision to have items overlap across multiple questions was made. After a detailed cross-reference project by the team, the decision was made that having items in multiple places (i.e. in different questions) was best for the moment as they could differ and we’d prefer people spend a few seconds deciding something was not relevant, than possibly missing major tasks to complete that we left out or eliminated by a question somewhere else (example, for vehicles and insurance – car insurance policy closure might be eliminated if they don’t have a car, or if they do not have any insurance, but more obscure situations where they had sold their car but not canceled their policy, or had a policy for a car they didn’t own).

The name is ‘International’ but only the United States is represented. Are there other countries?

Though it is the International Deceased Resolution Standards, the initial release from 2020 is focused on the United States. Different nuances of other cultures, laws and governments will be incorporated into addendums and variants so that everyone can benefit from the list. The expectation is that English speaking countries, along with Brazil (where its creator had previously lived) will be the first countries of focus for this expansion. The team’s preliminary focus will be to refine the existing list before undertaking the planned expansion efforts.



How does one use the IDRS?

Each of the items in the IDRS corresponds to a question. The questions have been structured so that their answer provides for a top level decision as to whether a user should review all of its items for applicability for their deceased person. Understand which questions can be answered with a negative and this will reduce the number of possible ‘to do’ items from 940 (in 2020 release) to a number far fewer. Then review the remaining items in the questions that have known positive responses to determine which of those will actually require resolution, and which are not applicable. This can be completed by printing out the list and using the reference letters for questions on the side, or by using the free mobile application, HeirList, that supports this.

Why does almost every question start with an item to gather information?

The decision was made to have separate information gathering items as the location and structure of documents and information will vary across all of the areas covered. The IDRS was built in such a way that it is essentially dozens of nested check lists, with each being independent (mostly) to the others. In practice we’d expect document and information gathering across all areas to be done as one effort, but broke it up into different items as to provide a location to record any specific nuances of each area.

Why were religious specifics avoided?

The list was meant to be religion agnostic, and HeirList intends to pursue support for how each of the item areas would differ for major religions. Given the differences of opinion, along with the idea of telling people what their religion dictates for something this important, it was decided including specifics would be avoided outside of pointing out where differences may be apparent. For each of the major religions and branches, HeirList is planning to ask the central governing body for official guidance by question and item, and then post them on their letterhead (if possible) for reference by that religion’s adherents. The IDRS and HeirList both avoided (as much as they could) directing people or giving advice on religious protocol. The last thing one should do is attempt to translate these types of areas. In the future we will both work with the religions so that they are able to within the IDRS framework and with HeirList’s Knowledge Base as the delivery mechanism.

What is the meaning and use of the #IDRS hashtag?

For Social Media, e.g. our Facebook Group, we would like people to use the following hashtag structure. #IDRS-(Item Number or Question Letter), so that people can search on tips, questions or help and get focused results. #IDRS-125 would be the hashtag for something related to Item 125. We expect that people will have a lot of questions to be answered and discover many nuances and variants, and we are looking for an efficient system to capture knowledge.



What is HeirList?

HeirList is a free mobile application to manage this process, which also has an over 500 page Knowledge Base providing more details on what each item is and how to resolve it. Both Apple and Google Play Stores have the application, and the website www.HeirList.com has more information. The Premium features for the application and the Knowledge Base are unfortunately not free of charge.

What will Passing Expert be?

Passing Expert is a future service for larger scale support on Item closure and process management. A system for tracking and lower cost execution is planned to be developed, but some of HeirList's core team and others will be available for those who feel they could utilize assistance before that is available. The HeirList team is unsure when it will be ready, but middle to later 2022 at the earliest. Anyone who wishes to start a similar service is encouraged, and will find HeirList is supportive of those who are reputedly assisting others.

All contributions in the form of feedback are appreciated. The list will continue to be published, and the application (HeirList) will continue to be free of charge so that as many people as possible will be able to benefit from this effort. Thank you again from all of us, your support is greatly appreciated.