

Death Certificate Tips

DO:

- Enter the underlying disease that caused death
- Only list things that actually contributed to the death
- Pay attention to “Due to” between lines in Box 36 Part I to form a logical sequence (A due to B due to C due to D)
- Enter the Manner of Death (Box 39)

DO NOT:

- List nonspecific *mechanisms* like “shock”, “sepsis”, “cardiac arrest”, “respiratory failure”. Instead list the actual disease that caused such a mechanism.
- List random stuff in Box 36 Part I (it must form a logical sequence)
- Certify deaths from trauma (e.g. hip fractures) or toxicity (e.g. drug overdose) – call the Medical Examiner
- List ESRD or CHF without listing the disease that caused the organ to fail
- Use the term Intracranial hemorrhage. Rather, specify the type and etiology of the hemorrhage

Examples

a) Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease

a) End Stage Renal Disease
Due To
b) Diabetic nephropathy

a) Cardiac tamponade
Due To
b) Hemopericardium
Due to
c) Ruptured myocardial infarction

Red Flags:

*Stop to consider **NON-Natural** causes for any of the following:*

- Failure to thrive
- Sepsis
- Seizures
- Cerebral Palsy
- -plegia of any kind
- Brain/Intracranial bleeds
- Aspiration pneumonia
- Malnutrition
- Dehydration

Include the cause of any of these, as appropriate.

Improving the health of the people in our communities by providing quality, compassionate care to everyone, every time

CAUSE OF DEATH

36. PART I. ENTER the chain of events, diseases, injuries or complications - that directly caused the death. DO NOT omit terminal events such as cardiac, spinal, respiratory arrest or vascular fibrillation without showing the etiology. Enter only one cause on line.

If diabetes was an immediate, underlying or contributing cause of death be sure to record diabetes in either Part I or Part II. Enter the date of death section, as appropriate.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death)

SEPARATELY list conditions, IF ANY, leading to the cause listed on line 1. Enter the UNDERLYING CAUSE (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) LAST

PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I


39. MANNER OF DEATH

Approximate Interval Between Onset and Death

Last event

First event

Time



37. DID TOBACCO USE CONTRIBUTE TO DEATH?

Yes Probably Unknown

No

38. IF FEMALE

Not pregnant within past year

Pregnant at time of death

Not pregnant, but pregnant within 45 days of death

Unknown if pregnant within the past year

Not pregnant, but pregnant 45 days to 1 year before death

40a. WAS AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED?

40b. WERE AUTOPSY FINDINGS AVAILABLE PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF CAUSE OF DEATH?

"Due to"

Only five options: Natural, Accident, Homicide, Suicide, or Indeterminate. Clinicians may only certify Natural deaths.