Guidelines for Completing the Medical Certificate of Death and the Medical Certificate of Stillbirth Vital Statistics, eHealth Saskatchewan





Preface

he intent of this document is to provide guidance on the completion of the Medical Certificate of Death form (not the registration of death form). This document does not contain guidelines for determining the cause(s) of death. The cause(s) of death rules of coding are established by the World Health Organization and used by Statistics Canada to code the cause(s) of death documented on the Medical Certificate of Death and Medical Certificate of Stillbirth.

Why is it important to complete the Medical Certificate of Death and Medical Certificate of Stillbirth correctly?

Death registration serves two purposes. First, the completed death/stillbirth registration form is a permanent legal record of the death/stillbirth of an individual. To this end, it records the personal information about the decedent and details of the circumstances of death/stillbirth that are legally required to issue a burial permit and to settle the estate, insurance, and pensions. Secondly, death/stillbirth registration forms, specifically the Medical Certificate of Death and Medical Certificate of Stillbirth, are the source of mortality statistics that form the basis of the oldest and most extensive public health surveillance systems. Statistics Canada requires death/stillbirth information to produce population estimates and projections, monitor demographic and health trends, contribute to methodological studies, support government policy and research studies and assist health professionals in disease surveillance and epidemiological studies. Vital statistics are the basis for important health and demographic indicators, such as life expectancy, infant mortality, cause(s) of death, fertility and mortality rates.

Who can complete the Medical Certificate of Death and Medical Certificate of Stillbirth?

Legislation was changed to accommodate the request to allow nurse practitioners (identified as prescribed practitioners Sections 15.1 and 25.1 in *The Vital Statistics Regulations*) to complete and sign the Medical Certificate of Death, Interim Medical Certificate of Death, Medical Certificate of Stillbirth and Interim Medical Certificate of Stillbirth. Sections 35(2)(c) and (d), 36, 49(1)(c) and (d) and 50 of *The Vital Statistics Act* now state that:

35(2) Unless there is reason to believe that a death occurred in any of the circumstances set out in *The Coroners Act, 1999* as circumstances in which notification is required to be given to a coroner, a medical certificate of death is to be prepared:

(a) by a physician who was in attendance at the time of death or attended the deceased during the last illness of the deceased if the physician is able to make a reasonable determination of the medical cause of death;

(b) if there is no attending physician who is able to make a reasonable determination of the medical cause of death, by any other physician who is able to make a reasonable determination of the medical cause of death;



(c) by a prescribed practitioner who was in attendance at the time of death or attended the deceased during the last illness of the deceased if the prescribed practitioner is able to make a reasonable determination of the medical cause of death; or

(d) if there is no prescribed practitioner mentioned in clause (c) who is able to make a reasonable determination of the medical cause of death, by any other prescribed practitioner who is able to make a reasonable determination of the medical cause of death.

36(1) A physician or prescribed practitioner who is awaiting the results of an autopsy, or a coroner to whom a death has been reported but who has not completed his or her responsibilities with respect to the death, may complete an interim medical certificate of death, in a form approved by the registrar, for the purpose of enabling a person to obtain a burial permit pursuant to section 42.

(2) A physician, prescribed practitioner or coroner who completes an interim medical certificate of death:

(a) must submit the interim medical certificate of death in accordance with clause 35(4)(a); and

(b) as soon as is practicable after the results of an autopsy have been received or the coroner's responsibilities have been completed, as the case may be, must complete a final medical certificate of death and submit it to the registrar.

35(4) Subject to sections 36, 37 and 38, as soon as is practicable after the death of an individual:

(a) the person who completes the medical certificate of death must submit the completed medical certificate of death:

(i) to the funeral director to whom the body has been released; or

(ii) if the body has not been released to a funeral director, to the registrar;

49(1) As soon as is practicable in the circumstances of a stillbirth, a medical certificate of stillbirth in the form approved by the registrar, setting out the cause of stillbirth, must be completed:

(a) by a physician who was in attendance at the time of the stillbirth;

(b) if there was no physician in attendance at the time of the stillbirth, by any other physician or a coroner;

(c) by a prescribed practitioner who was in attendance at the time of the stillbirth; or

(d) if there was no prescribed practitioner in attendance at the time of the stillbirth, by any other prescribed practitioner or a coroner.

(2) As soon as is practicable in the circumstances of a stillbirth:

(a) the person who completes the medical certificate of stillbirth must submit the completed medical certificate of stillbirth to the funeral director to whom the body has been released; and

(b) the funeral director must:

(i) send to the electronic database a confirmation of receipt of the completed medical certificate of stillbirth; and



(ii) submit the original medical certificate of stillbirth to the registrar.

50(1) A physician or prescribed practitioner who is awaiting the results of an autopsy, or a coroner to whom a stillbirth has been reported but who has not completed his or her responsibilities with respect to the stillbirth, may complete an interim medical certificate of stillbirth, in a form approved by the registrar, for the purpose of enabling a person to obtain a burial permit pursuant to section 56.

(2) A physician, prescribed practitioner or coroner who completes an interim medical certificate of stillbirth:

(a) must submit the interim medical certificate of stillbirth in accordance with subsection 49(2); and

(b) as soon as is practicable after the results of an autopsy have been received or the coroner's responsibilities have been completed, as the case may be, must complete a final medical certificate of stillbirth and submit it to the registrar.

15.1 For the purposes of clauses 35(2)(c) and (d) and subsections 36(1) and (2) of the Act, a nurse practitioner is a prescribed practitioner.

25.1 For the purposes of clauses 49(1)(c) and (d) and subsections 50(1) and (2) of the Act, a nurse practitioner is a prescribed practitioner.

General Guidelines

- Per The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 original forms provided by eHealth Saskatchewan must be used.
- Any alterations or corrections to errors are to be initialed.
- Full text is to be used avoid using medical abbreviations as abbreviations can have multiple meanings and may be misinterpreted.
- Record all entries in a legible manner. Illegible entries cannot be recorded and will affect the quality of statistical data.
- Original copies of the Medical Certificate of Death or Medical Certificate of Stillbirth are to be provided. Copies are not permitted, however may be accepted in extenuating circumstances with approval from eHealth Saskatchewan.
- Hospital labels must not be affixed to the Medical Certificate of Death or Medical Certificate of Stillbirth, as these are legal documents and are required to be completed by an individual. As per Section 14(3) of *The Vital Statistics Act*, 2009:
 - "No statement shall be accepted for the registration of an event unless:
 - a) the name of the subject individual and all other particulars expressed in words are written entirely in characters of the Roman alphabet; and
 - b) all particulars expressed in numerals, other than numerals that form part of an individual's name, are written entirely in Arabic numerals."
- Documents are to be completed using blue or black ink.



- Definition of Stillbirth according to The Vital Statistics Act, 2009
 - "stillbirth" means the complete expulsion or extraction from the mother after at least 20 weeks' pregnancy, or after attaining a weight of at least 500 grams, of a product of conception in which, after the expulsion or extraction, there is no breathing, beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord or unmistakable movement of voluntary muscle; (« mortinaissance »)
- When completing the Interim Medical Certificate of Death/Interim Medical Certificate of Stillbirth use the Medical Certificate of Death/Stillbirth form, completing all the fields on the form except 10-17 on the Medical Certificate of Death and 11-15 on the Medical Certificate of Stillbirth. Note the Cause of Death field, should indicate that this is an Interim Medical Certificate of Death/Stillbirth by writing "Interim" or noting that the body is being released for post mortem examination.



Specific Guidelines

- The following fields are mandatory (**note**: these fields correspond to the new form and differences between the new form (coming soon) and the current form have been noted):
 - o (1) Surname of Deceased
 - o (1) Given Name(s) of Deceased
 - (2) Date of Birth (new to be introduced on the new forms (disregard if completing an old version)
 - o (2) Date of Death
 - Note: The Date of Death has to be the date the deceased was pronounced dead and coincide with the medical records. (Any time after midnight is considered the next day)
 - o (3) Sex of Deceased
 - o (4) Saskatchewan Health Card Number (if applicable)
 - o (5) Place of Death
 - Note: If the death did not occur in a hospital or institution, a street address (residential) or a land location is required.
 - o (6) Cause of Death
 - Note: Please ensure the cause of death is as accurate and complete as possible. Medical cause of death is coded by Statistics Canada and they may follow up if this information is unclear or incomplete.
 - 0 (7) Whether or not an autopsy is being conducted
 - (10) Manner of Death indicate one of the following:
 - (A) Natural;
 - (B) Suicide;
 - (C) Homicide;
 - (D) Accident; or
 - (E) Undetermined
 - (11, 12, 13) If injury is reported, include how the injury occurred (these fields would only be completed where the death is unnatural and is being investigated by a coroner).
 - (14) If the sex of the deceased is female indicate if death occurred during pregnancy or within 90 days following termination of pregnancy
 - 0 (15, 16, 17) Was there a surgical operation performed within 28 days of death
 - Note: If surgery is checked Yes, date of surgery and operative findings must be included



- o (18) Print the name of the physician, prescribed practitioner or coroner
- o (18) Print the mailing address of physician, prescribed practitioner or coroner
- 0 (19) Identifies who is completing the form, check off one of the following designations:
 - (A) Attending physician;
 - (B) Physician attending after death
 - (C) Coroner
 - (D) Prescribed practitioner (i.e. nurse practitioner); or (new to be added on the new forms, if completing an old version draw a check box and write "Prescribed practitioner")
 - (E) Prescribed practitioner attending after death (new to be added on the new forms, if completing an old version draw a check box and write "Prescribed practitioner attending after death")
- 0 (20) Sign your name on the Signature line
- 0 (20) Fill in the Date of Signature
 - Note: The date cannot be before the date of death.

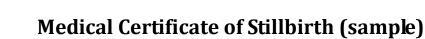


Appendix

Medical Certificate of Death (sample)

eHealth Saskatchewan	MEDICAL	CERTIFICATE DEATH	Registration No. (office use only) N° d'enregistrement (a l'unage du bure			
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Accident Gause indéterminé Accident Gause indéterminé How did injury occur? (describe circum	te					
14 If a woman, did death occur either durin S'il s'agit d'une femme, lo décès s'est il pro	ig pregnancy or within 90 days fo duit pendant une grossesse ou dan	Illowing termination of pregr s les 90 jours qui ont suivi la fir	nancy? a de la grossesse?			
Was there a surgical operation within 28 dr Y a-t-il ou intervention chirurgicale dans les Yes./ Oui Yes./ Oui No / Non Orientation Endinger3 / Data		16 If "yes" give date of s Month / Mois	urgical operation / Si - oui Day / Jour	r, date de l'interver Year / Année		
Production of the solution of	/					
18 Name of physician or coroner (print or b) Nom du médecin ou du coroner (dactivo Mar K Sm; Hh Address / Adresse	graphier ou écrire en lettres mou					
123 That Road	Physician attending after death Médecin présent porés la décè	Coroner	Prescrib	tioner		
19 Attending physician Médecin présent	Physician attending after death Médecin présent porés la décè	s Coroner of my knowledge and belie que of exact:	Prescrib Prac 24 16 24/100	tioner 2016		

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eHealth Saskatchewan	MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF STILLBIRTH CERTIFICAT MÉDICAL	Registration No. (office use only) N° d'enregistrement (a l'usage du bureau)			
/-	DE MORTINAISSANCE	Burial Permit Number/Nombre de permis d'inhume			
1. Sumame / Nom de famille Smith Given Name(s) / Prénom(s)			2. Sex/Sexe		
Michael Jacob					
3. Date of stillbirth / Date de mortinaissance Month / Mois Day / Jour Year / Année 05 12 2016	4. Duration of pregnancy / Durée de la gross	Poids à la mortin			
6. Place of Stillbirth - Name of Hospital or exact a Lieu de mortinaissance - Nom de l'hôpital ou a	adresse exacte où a eu lieu la mortinaissance				
City, town, village or other place. (If ural, give Village, village ou autre endroit. (S'il s'agit d'ur	section, township, range and meridian) ne municipalité rurale, indiquer, la section, le cantor	n, le rang, et le méridien)			
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	FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEFO				
7. Cause of Death / Cause de décès			Check whether fetal or maternal Cocher:		
Part I / Partie I Immediate cause - Fetal disease or condition directly					
leading to stillbirth Cause immédiate - Maladie ou état du foetu directement la mortinaissance.	a) Intrauterine	Anoxia usé par ou en conséquence de			
Antecedent causes - Fetal and/or maternal of any, giving rise to the immediate cause (a) all underlying cause last Causes antérieures - Affections du foetus or	bove, stating the b) <u>IIICENTALUIS</u> due to, or as a consequence of / ca	ufficiency usé par ou en conséquerbe de			
les deux à la fois, ayant, le cas échéant, pro immédiate a). Mentionner la cause initiale en	demier	ey Disease			
Part II / Partie II Other significant conditions of fetus or mot	II II				
may have contributed to the stillbirth but were related to the immediate cause (a) above	e not casually				
Autres affections importantes du foetus ou qui peuvent avoir contribué à las mortinaissa sont pas directement reliées à la cause imme	nce mais qui ne				
8. Autopsy being held? 9. E Y a-t-il autopsie? th	Does the cause of stillbirth take into account	10. May further informati	on relating to the o		
	re autopsy findings? a cause de la mortinaissance susmentionée ient-elle compte des résultats de l'autopsie?	of stillbirth be availab Y aura-t-il d'autres re concernmant la caus	enseignements ulté		
	Yes / Oui No / Non	Yes / Oui	No / Non		
	a procedure for delivery? ou autre intervention lors de l'accouchement? No / Non	Was fetus dead before s Le foetus était-il mort ava	uch procedure? ant cette interventio No /Non		
12. Did death occur before labour?	During Labour? Labour induced?	,	J NO /NOR		
La mort a-t-elle eu lieu avant le travait? Yes / Oui No/ Non	Pendantle travail? A-t-elle été provi	oquée par le travail? city method) / Oui (préciser con	ument) 🔀 No /		
13. Congenital malformation? / Malformation co	ongénitale? No / Non				
14. Birth Injuries? Traumatisme obstétrical?	No / Non				
15. Pregnancy complication? / Complication per Yes (specify) / Oui (préciser)	ndant la grossesse? No / Non Chronic Kidney Di	sease			
16. Name of physician or coroner (print or type) Nom du médécin ou du coroner (dactylogra) VICTORIA DIDO	phier ou écrire en lettres moulées)				

17. Attending physician
 Physician attending after death
 Médicin présent après la édècis
 Coroner
 Physician attending after death
 Médicin présent après la édècis
 Coroner
 Physician coroner
 Signature (médicin présent, coroner)
 Signature (médicin présent, coroner)

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Statement of Death (sample)

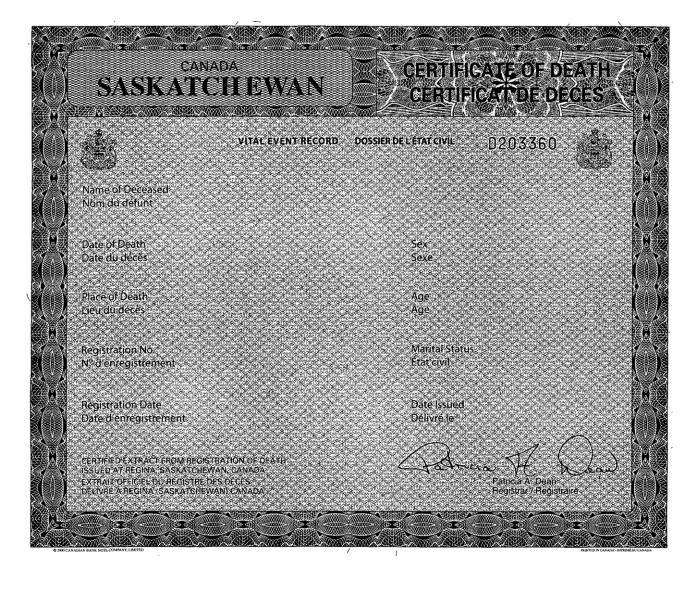
eHealth Saskatchewan

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			d'une municipalité rue	ale, indiquer la	section, le canton.	le rang et le méridi	en)				
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Death Certificate (sample)



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