

Guidance when completing a medical certificate of cause of death

(Guidance applies to Form 66 only)

Prompt and accurate certification of death is essential. It provides legal evidence of the fact and cause(s) of death, thus enabling the death to be formally registered; the family can then make arrangements for disposal of the body.

If you are a registered medical practitioner and were in attendance during the deceased's last illness, you are required under the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 to certify the cause of death. You must state the cause or causes of death to the best of your knowledge and belief.

When completing a form 66 medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) please use the following quick reference guidance, as well as the guidance notes printed at the front of your MCCD books:

Name of deceased: Print clearly the full name of the deceased

Date of death as stated to me: date written in the following format '1st' day of month and year e.g. 'February 2017'

Age as stated to me: you should complete the age of the deceased in completed years or, if under one year, in completed months

Place of death: In full clearly write the place of death. This should be recorded as precise as possible.

Last seen alive by me: you should record the date when you last saw the deceased alive, irrespective of whether any other medical practitioner saw the person alive subsequently. The date written in the following format '1st' day of month and year e.g. 'February 2017'

Please ensure 1-4 is circled (1 option only) and also make sure a-c is circled (1 option only):

- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 The certified cause of death takes account of information obtained from post-mortem.2 Information from post-mortem may be available later.3 Post-mortem not being held.4 I have reported this death to the Coroner for further action.
<small>[See overleaf]</small> | } | <i>Please ring appropriate digit(s) and letter</i> | { | <ol style="list-style-type: none">a Seen after death by me.b Seen after death by another medical practitioner but not by me.c Not seen after death by a medical practitioner. |
|---|---|--|---|---|

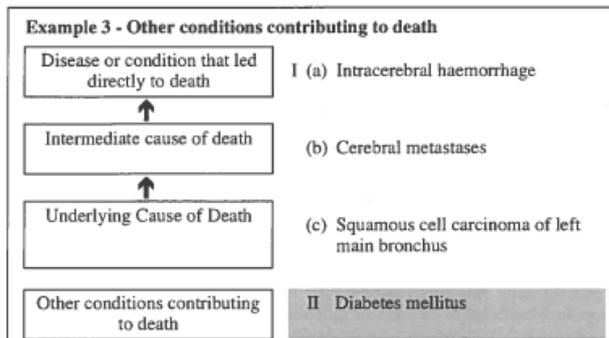
Cause of Death:

This section of the certificate is divided into Parts I and II.

Part I- it is essential that you state the cause(s) of death accurately and full to the best of your knowledge and belief. The death certificate is the relatives' permanent legal record of the death.

Underlying cause of death- this should be approached by considering the main causal sequence of conditions leading to death. The disease or condition that led directly to the death should be record on the first line 'I (a)' and then work back in time through antecedents of this condition until you reach the underlying cause of death, which initiated the chain of events leading to the death. As a result the lowermost part of Part I should therefore contain the underlying Cause of Death.

Part II- this should be used when one or more conditions have contributed to death but are not part of the main causal sequence leading to death.



Modes of dying- you should avoid completing the medical certificate with a mode of dying as the only cause of death in part I. This will result in the death being referred to the coroner by the registrar. For example 'heart failure' given alone as a cause does not indicate why the patient dies. The underlying cause of death must be given, e.g. myocardial infarction.

Please also avoid abbreviations, vague terms and symptoms

Do not use abbreviations or medical symbols- they can be ambiguous, inclusion of such ambiguous terms may delay registration. Do not use "old age" or "senility" as the sole cause of death in part I unless a more specific cause of death cannot be given and the deceased was aged 80 or over. If you record a symptom, state also the underlying disease.

Signature of Certifying Doctor and name of consultant:

You must sign the certificate and add your qualifications, address and the date. It would greatly assist the registrar if you could also **PRINT YOUR NAME IN BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS**. If the death occurred in hospital, the name of the consultant who was responsible for the care of the patient must also be given.

*****The Register Office request that you print or stamp your GMC number on each MCCD to further assist the registrar when checking the name of the certifying Doctor*****