

Understanding MCCD and Coroner Reporting in New South Wales

Reading time:

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What is the purpose of a MCCD?

To notify deaths to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in the relevant State or Territory in which the death occurred. It enables an authority to be provided to the funeral director to arrange disposal of the body .

When should I not issue a MCCD?

You should not write a MCCD if the death must be reported to the Coroner. In other words, reporting a death to the Coroner and writing a MCCD are mutually exclusive activities.

When should I report a death to the Coroner?

Depends on the State and Territory. There is jurisdictional coronial legislation that outlines the circumstances in which a person's death must be reported to the Coroner. These deaths are sometimes referred to as 'reportable deaths'. In general, deaths should be reported to the Coroner when :

- Death was violent, unnatural, sudden, or unexpected.
- Cause of death is unknown
- Death resulted, directly or indirectly, from an accident or injury (for example: drownings, motor vehicle accident)
- The identity of the deceased person is unknown
- The death occurred during or following a health-related procedure
- A MCCD has not been issued and is not likely to be issued
- The death occurred in custody

In addition, in [NSW](#):

- The death occurred as a result of, or in the course of, a police operation.
- The deceased was a child in care to whom a report has been made about them or a sibling in the 3 years preceding their death to the Department of Family and Community Services.
- The deceased person was living in, or temporarily absent from, an authorised residential centre for persons with a disability.
- The deceased person was in, temporarily absent from or residing at a declared mental health facility within the meaning of the [Mental Health Act 2007](#) for the purpose of receiving care, treatment or assistance.

If you are unsure if a death should be reported to the Coroner, contact MIPS.

Who can complete a MCCD?

A medical practitioner who is either responsible for a patient's care immediately prior to their death, or who examined the deceased body after death and is comfortably satisfied with the cause of it.

You may also get asked to complete a MCCD for a patient you have not met or have not had contact with for a long time. While you are not legally obliged to have had recent contact with the deceased person before death, you must have enough information based on their medical history or an examination to complete and sign a MCCD.

Where should I record the information associated to the death?

In the patient's medical records. This is especially important if you are not comfortably satisfied with the cause of death and decide not to complete a MCCD.

Health records remain confidential after death. Third parties can generally access them only with permission of the executor/administrator of the estate of the deceased or by a Court order.

Do I need to see the body before signing a MCCD?

It depends on the State and Territory, jurisdictional legislation applies. In general, the following advice is relevant:

- VIC: you must examine the deceased body to issue a MCCD. The only exception is when you have recently cared for the person as a treating medical practitioner.
- ACT, NSW, QLD, WA: you do not need to examine the deceased body of a person to issue a MCCD.
- SA: You must examine the body to issue a MCCD if you did not care for the deceased person as a treating medical practitioner immediately before their death. If you did, you do not need to examine the body.

What is the MCCD format and what information do I need to record?

The MCCD format was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for international use. It consists of two sections:

Part I - related to the disease/condition that directly caused death, and any precedent conditions that may have contributed to the disease/condition which caused death.

Part II - any other important diseases/conditions related to the death, but not associated to the disease/condition that directly caused it.

Where should I send the completed MCCD?

To the State or Territory Registry of Birth, Deaths and Marriages office (except in WA)

Are MCCD formats different in each Australian State?

Each State and Territory have comparable but not identical formats. They are all derived from the form recommended by the World Health Organisation for international use.

Where can I obtain a blank MCCD form to use?

Blank Medical Certificate of Cause of Death forms can be obtained from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in each State and Territory.

How should I proceed if I am dealing with a perinatal death?

Each States and Territory has a different "Perinatal Death Certificate". This form should be completed for:

- stillbirths of at least 20 weeks gestation or 400 g of weight, or
- an infant who dies within 28 days after birth.

Where can I find further information about completing a MCCD?

In NSW:

Forms required: [MCCD forms](#) (including perinatal deaths)

- [NSW Health Coronial Checklist](#) – useful resource for NSW health staff to assist in determining whether a death should be reported to the Coroner.

Relevant legislation: [Coroners Act 2009](#), [Public Health Regulations 2012](#), [NSW Health – Cremation Certificates and related requirements](#) & [Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995](#).

Coroners Court: [Coroners Court of New South Wales](#)

[NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages](#)

- [Death certificates](#)
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