ONLINE DEATH CERTIFICATE COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION

Background:

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) now provides a Medical Practitioners Online (MPO) system allowing Medical Practitioners to submit Medical Certificates of Causes of Death notices online to BDM.

Hard copy forms will be slowly phased out over the first half of 2014 and the expectation is that all Medical Practitioners will commence using the MPO system.

Legislation:

The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996 (the Act) states that:
1. A doctor who was responsible for a person’s medical care immediately before death, or who examines the body of a deceased person after death, must, within 48 hours after the death, notify the Registrar of the death and of the cause of death in a form and manner approved by the Registrar and specifying any prescribed particulars and
2. When a notice is given under the above, the doctor must also give a notice in the form and manner approved by the Registrar and specifying any particulars that the death has occurred to the funeral director or other person arranging for the disposal of the human remains.

Medical Practitioners Online (MPO):

BDM in consultation with doctors has developed the MPO system which allows doctors to send a notification of a death online to BDM rather than submitting a hard copy form.

In addition, the MPO allows doctors to:
- Access the form by validating their details with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA);
- Create, save and submit a notification of death to BDM using an electronic Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (eMCCD) or and electronic Medical Certificate of Cause of Perinatal Death (eMCCPD);
- Use this free service rather than ordering, completing and mailing the existing hard copy notification of death;
- Securely store and save a form if needed to come back and complete it later;
- Minimise errors on the notification of death as the system alerts doctors about missing information;
- Track the status of a notification of death that has been submitted to BDM for certificate issue;
- Automatically provide copies of the notification of death to the relevant areas of the health services (HIM, medical administration, and the mortuary), funeral director (if known) as well as BDM on submission;
- Provide a signed printed copy to the funeral director or other person who is arranging the disposal of the deceased person.
How to use the MPO system:

1. Go to www.bdm.vic.gov.au
2. Click on “Secure Login”
3. Click on “Medical Practitioners Online”
4. Click on eMCCD (in relation to a death of a person aged 28 days or over) or eMCCPD (in relation to an infant aged less than 28 days)
5. Complete details of form as directed.
6. Either save the partially completed form to complete later, or submit completed form to the Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
7. Print the completed form for the funeral director – you must sign the funeral director’s copy and leave it with the patient’s medical notes.

Please note:

- You will require your AHPRA registration number to access the system. A death certificate can only be completed by a registered Medical Practitioner.
- The completed death certificate must be submitted to the Registry within 48 hours of death.
- You must print a copy of the final version of the online death certificate, sign it and leave it with the patient’s medical record. This is an imperative step as the funeral director is unable to collect a deceased person from the health service mortuary unless a signed death certificate is provided.
- A death certificate must not be completed in relation to a death that is reviewable or reportable to the Coroner – please see further details below and also in the attached flow-chart. If you are unsure whether you are required to report a death to the Coroner, contact the Coroner’s Court on 1300 309 519.

Coronial Reporting:

Deaths are reviewable by or reportable to the Coroner as specified in section 10 or section 13 of the Coroners Act 2008.

Coronial reports should be made via the usual online Coronial Deposition process following discussion with the Initial Investigations Office.

Requirements for a reportable death:

- The body is in Victoria; or
- The death occurred in Victoria; or
- The cause of death occurred in Victoria; or
- The person ordinarily resided in Victoria at the time of death.

In addition, the death must be:

(a) a death that appears to have been unexpected, unnatural or violent or to have resulted, directly or indirectly, from an accident or injury; or
(b) a death that occurs—
- during a medical procedure; or
- following a medical procedure where the death is or may be causally related to the medical procedure— and a registered medical practitioner would not, immediately before the procedure was undertaken, have reasonably expected the death; or
(c) the death of a person who immediately before death was a person placed in custody or care; or
(d) the death of a person who immediately before death was a patient within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1986; or

(e) the death of a person under the control, care or custody of the Secretary to the Department of Justice or a member of the police force; or

(f) the death of a person who is subject to a non-custodial supervision order under section 26 of the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997; or

(g) the death of a person whose identity is unknown; or

(h) a death that occurs in Victoria if a notice under section 37(1) of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996 has not been signed and is not likely to be signed; or

(i) a death that occurs at a place outside Victoria if the cause of death is not certified by a person who, under the law in force in that place, is authorised to certify that death and the cause of death is not likely to be certified by a person who is authorised to certify in that place; or

(j) a death—

- of a prescribed class of person;
- that occurs in prescribed circumstances.

**Reviewable deaths:**
The death of a child is a reviewable death if the deceased child is the second or subsequent child of the deceased child’s parent to have died (some exclusions apply – please refer to the Coroners Act 2008 for further detail)

**For further information:**
Supporting information and other useful links are available at


including

- eMCCD Quick Reference Guide
- ABS Information Paper: Cause of Death Certification Australia
- ABS Quick Reference Guide
- FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions for medical practitioners
- Coroners Court of Victoria eMedical Deposition Form (external link)

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