

CDC has changed guidelines for death certificates and Covid-19

**CDC** Guidance for Certifying Deaths Due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

**CAUSE OF DEATH (See instructions and examples)**

32. **PART I.** Enter the chain of events—diseases, injuries, or complications—that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) → a Heart attack  
Due to (or as a consequence of)

Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the **UNDERLYING CAUSE** (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) **LAST** c COVID-19  
Due to (or as a consequence of)

→ This death is certified as COVID-19, not heart disease!

**PART II.** Enter other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in PART I.

33. WAS AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED?  Yes  No

34. WERE AUTOPSY FINDINGS AVAILABLE TO COMPLETE THE CAUSE OF DEATH?  Yes  No

35. DID TOBACCO USE CONTRIBUTE TO DEATH?  Yes  Probably

36. IF FEMALE

- Not pregnant within past year
- Pregnant at time of death
- Not pregnant, but pregnant within 42 days of death
- Not pregnant, but pregnant 43 days to 1 year before death
- Unknown if pregnant within the past year

37. MANNER OF DEATH

- Natural  Homicide
- Accident  Pending investigation
- Suicide  Could not be determined

\* If this were the ICD, it is NOT reported

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# Deaths

## What are seasonal influenza-related deaths?

Seasonal influenza-related deaths are deaths that occur in people for whom influenza infection was likely a contributor to the cause of death, but not necessarily the primary cause of death.

## Does CDC know the exact number of people who die from seasonal flu each year?

CDC does not know exactly how many people die from seasonal flu each year. There are several reasons for this. First, states are not required to report individual flu illnesses or deaths among people older than 18 years of age to CDC. Second, influenza is infrequently listed on death certificates of people who die from flu-related complications. Third, many flu-related deaths occur one or two weeks after a person's initial infection, either because the person may develop a secondary bacterial co-infection (such as bacterial pneumonia) or because influenza can aggravate an existing chronic illness (such as congestive heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Also, most people who die from flu-related complications are not tested for flu, or they seek medical care later in their illness when influenza can no longer be detected from respiratory samples. Sensitive influenza tests are only likely to detect influenza if performed within a week after onset of illness. In addition, some commonly used tests to diagnose influenza in clinical settings are not highly sensitive and can provide false negative results (i.e. they misdiagnose flu illness as not being flu.) For these reasons, many flu-related deaths may not be recorded on death certificates. These are some of the reasons that CDC and other public health agencies in the United States and other countries use statistical and mathematical models to estimate the annual number of flu-related deaths.

Flu deaths in children are slightly different though because these are nationally notifiable, which means that individual flu deaths must be reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. States report flu-related child deaths in the United States through the [Influenza Associated Pediatric Mortality Surveillance System](#). However, even deaths in children may be underreported, for many of the same reasons listed above.