

## How to add specificity for external causes

### Surgery and procedures

- What the result of the complication was;
- what the complication was;
- what medical procedure was performed;
- specify what condition necessitated the treatment.



Example of proper completion for unexpected reaction to anaesthetic

Cause of death	Approximate interval between onset and death
<b>Part I</b> Disease or condition directly leading to death*	
a) Anaphylactic shock (vecuronium) Due to (as consequence of)	minutes
Antecedent causes Induction of anaesthesia for b) nephrectomy Due to (as consequence of)	minutes
Morbid conditions, if any, giving rise to the above cause, stating the underlying condition last c) Reflux nephropathy with shrunken right kidney Due to (as consequence of)	days
d)	
<b>Part II</b> Other significant conditions contributing to death, but not related to the disease or condition causing it	

\* This does not mean the mode of dying, e.g. heart failure, respiratory failure. It means the disease, injury or complication that caused death.

### Transport accident

- Type of vehicle (car, heavy transport vehicle, motorcycle, etc.);
- status of decedent (driver, passenger, pedestrian, person outside the vehicle, etc.);



- if a collision occurred specify the object(s) or type(s) of vehicle involved;

- specify the location of the accident (highway, railroad track). (See also the example at the back of this page).

### Poisoning or drug overdose

- Specify the type of name of the drug(s) or medication(s) or other substance(s). If unknown state "unknown drugs".



Edited by ....(national editor)

To be cut away if you are not allowed to certify deaths due to external causes

## How to add specificity for natural death

### Alcohol and tobacco use

- If, in your opinion, the use of alcohol, tobacco or other substance by the decedent caused the death report them in part I, if they contributed to death report them in part II.



### Diabetes

- Specify if mellitus, insulin dependent, non insulin dependent or other.

### Infectious diseases

- Include additional information about the aetiology;
- include additional information on the causative organism.

### Neoplasms

- The morphological type, if known;
- malignant, benign, etc., if not specific the morphology;
- site of origin of primary growths, stated as precisely as possible, and sites of secondary growths, clearly distinguished as such;
- if primary growth unknown or exact site within an organ not known, state accordingly;
- to avoid ambiguity in interpretation, if the term metastatic cancer is used, it should be qualified by identifying both the primary and secondary sites, identify whether metastatic TO (Secondary) or metastatic FROM (Primary).

### Old age, senility

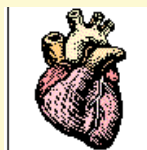
- Include a clear and etiological sequence for cause of death, since age is reported on the certificate, terms like senescence, senility and old age do not represent etiology.

### Pneumonia and Bronchopneumonia

- State the cause of any antecedent condition that led to the pneumonia;
- identify the causative organism;
- Identify if the condition is primary hypostatic or due to aspiration (of blood, food, meconium, etc.);
- if the pneumonia has been caused by debility or inactivity please state the condition leading to the inactivity or debility.

### Cardiovascular diseases

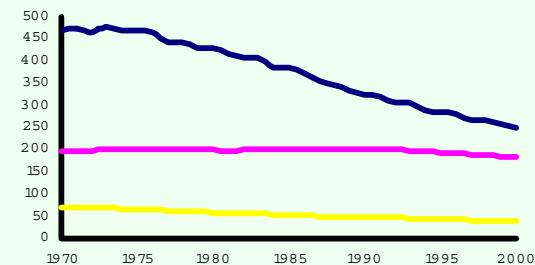
- Nature of disease process;
- site, if localized;
- acute or chronic, where relevant;
- any complications.



NATIONAL LOGO

# Instructions for completing the medical part of the death certificate

For all professionals permitted to fill in death certificates according to national law (national adaptation required)



Legend:  
— diseases of circulatory system  
— malignant neoplasms  
— external cause injury and poison

Evolution of mortality for neoplasm, cardiovascular diseases and violent deaths in Europe. Standardized rates (for 100.000) for total population.

(Source: WHO-Health for All Database, www.who.dk)

Accurate cause of death information is used to evaluate and improve the health of the population. It is an useful tool to plan social and health interventions.

For more information visit site: .....

See manual: Eurostat 2004 Completion

For information and suggestions: the national institution in charge



**Death certificate is an official permanent record of individual deaths including the causes of death certified by a physician, and any other required identifying information.**

Cause of death information should be your **BEST MEDICAL OPINION**

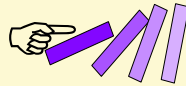
**Confidentiality**....(left blank for national adaptation)

### Completion of Cause of death section

- Print clearly using black ink
- Avoid parenthesis and abbreviations
- Provide the best estimate of the interval between onset of disease and death

#### Part I

Is used to report the **sequence** of events directly leading to death, starting from the **immediate cause** (the final disease, injury or condition directly causing death) in *line a*) and going back to causal chain in *line b*) and below to the **underlying cause** of death which is the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death, or the circumstances of the accident or violence which produced the fatal injury.



- Always report in *line a*) the immediate cause, this does not mean the mode of dying such as cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest;
- each condition reported in part I should be the cause of the condition entered in the line above;
- always report the underlying cause of death in the lowest used line;
- additional line(s) may be added if necessary, **Never** enter the starting point of the sequence in Part II because of lack of space in Part I;
- if two or more possible sequences resulted in death, report the one that most directly caused death.

#### Part II

Enter in Part II, in order of significance, any other significant diseases or conditions which, though were not part of the sequence in Part I, contributed to the fatal outcome.

### WARNING

Terminal events such as senility, ventricular fibrillation, atrial fibrillation, shock, multi-organ failure, electromechanical dissociation etc. should be avoided as the only cause of death. Always report an aetiology for these conditions, where possible.

### Example of proper completion for natural deaths

Cause of death		Approximate interval between onset and death
<b>Part I</b> Disease or condition directly leading to death*	a) <u>Acute hepatic failure</u> <small>Due to (as consequence of)</small>	1 week
Antecedent causes	b) <u>Secondary malignant neoplasm of liver</u> <small>Due to (as consequence of)</small>	2 months
Morbid conditions, if any, giving rise to the above cause, stating the underlying condition last	c) <u>Malignant neoplasm of the central portion of the breast</u> <small>Due to (as consequence of)</small>	7 months
	d) _____	
<b>Part II</b> Other significant conditions contributing to death, but not related to the disease or condition causing it	<u>Insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus</u>	11 years

\* This does not mean the mode of dying, e.g. heart failure, respiratory failure. It means the disease, injury or complication that caused death.

For imprecise terms and how to add specificity on some causes refer to list on the back of the leaflet.

### Other information to be provided

#### Manner of death

- Complete this item for all deaths. Deaths not due to external causes should be identified as "Natural".

#### Pregnancy

- If deceased is a **woman**, indicate if the death occurred during pregnancy, within 42 days after childbirths or between 43 days and 1 year after childbirth by checking the appropriate item if the item is provided on death certificate. Otherwise state this condition where appropriate.



#### Autopsy

- Omitting the information about autopsy affects the quality of mortality statistics. Cause of death should include information provided by autopsy or other post-mortem examinations. If results become available after the certificate has been issued, an amended certificate should be provided.

#### Place of death

- The place of death (e.g. deceased's home, hospital, nursing home, industrial site, farm) should be identified and reported

### External causes of death

According to the national laws external causes can be certified....left blank

- Always report the injuries with **site and impairment of function** that caused death in part I of the medical death certificate. Non fatal injuries, or diseases, can be reported in part II if they contributed to death;
- the external cause and manner of death should be reported in the lowest used line of part I (underlying cause) if an appropriate item is lacking in the death certificate. (*national adaptation required*).

#### Manner of death

- The item chosen must reflect the underlying cause of death. Report if the death was an *accident, suicide, homicide* or *could not be determined*.

#### Circumstances of occurrence of the accident/injury

This refers to the underlying cause of death

- use a short description of how the injury occurred, explaining the circumstances or cause of the accident or injury, such as "fell off ladder while painting house";
- if known, the **activity** at the time of injury, should be stated (e.g. "...while washing car");
- any **tool, weapon, chemical agent, drug** involved in the injury/poisoning should be mentioned and specified (e.g. "shot in the back with hunting rifle during hunt").

#### Place of injury/accident

- Enter the general category of the place where the injury occurred (e.g. at home, farm, prison, highway, lake, public offices building, recreational park, etc.).

### Example of proper completion for external causes

Cause of death		Approximate interval between onset and death
<b>Part I</b> Disease or condition directly leading to death*	a) <u>Cerebral hematoma</u> <small>Due to (as consequence of)</small>	hours
Antecedent causes	b) <u>Skull fracture of petrous bone</u> <small>Due to (as consequence of)</small>	hours
Morbid conditions, if any, giving rise to the above cause, stating the underlying condition last	c) <u>Pedestrian accidentally run over by a car while crossing a road</u> <small>Due to (as consequence of)</small>	hours
	d) _____	
<b>Part II</b> Other significant conditions contributing to death, but not related to the disease or condition causing it	_____	

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