



COVID-19 GUIDE FOR MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

This notice is provided as a guide for medical practitioners completing death certificates in COVID-19 related deaths. This notice is not intended as legal advice.

If someone dies from diagnosed COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 is that a reportable death under the [Coroners Act 1996](#)?

NO, please see the [notification on the court's website](#).

A death due to, or probably due to, COVID-19 or its complications is a natural cause death and is not a reportable death under the Coroners Act. A death certificate can be completed in the similar manner as a death due to influenza or other viral infection.

What is recorded on the Medical Cause of Death Certificate?

The [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) has provided guidance on how to certify deaths due to COVID-19. COVID-19 should be recorded on the medical cause of death certificate for all deceased where the disease caused, or **is assumed to have caused, or contributed to death.**

When can COVID-19 be “assumed” to have caused a death?

Where a person has been tested and confirmed to have COVID-19 and has died of complications associated with the infection, such as myocarditis or pneumonia, then COVID-19 is “assumed” to have contributed to the death and should be recorded on the death certificate.

Where a person is known to have suffered typical symptoms of COVID-19, such as fevers, cough, or breathing difficulties, during a COVID-19 pandemic, but has not been formally tested or diagnosed, then it is reasonable to “assume” the death was related to COVID-19 and should be recorded on the death certificate.

Certification of deaths occurring at home will depend on the information available to the certifying medical practitioner. Where there is no recent history of respiratory symptoms, fever or other symptoms known to be associated with COVID-19, and there are no other underlying conditions that could explain the death, the death will need to be reported to the Coroner.

In summary, medical practitioners should write COVID-19 (confirmed) or (suspected), on the death certificate when they determine, to the best of their knowledge and belief, that the patient was suffering from the infection and this was a likely causative factor in the death.

Example of medical certificate of cause of death

Medical Data: Part 1 and 2			
Disease or condition leading directly to death. Antecedent Causes that gave rise to the above cause, stating the underlying cause on the lowest line.	1	Cause of Death	Interval between onset and Death
	A	Acute respiratory distress syndrome	2 days
	B	Viral Pneumonia	10 days
	C	COVID-19	10 days
	D		
Other significant conditions contributing to death but not related to the diseases or conditions causing it.	2	Coronary artery disease, Type 2 Diabetes, COPD	