

## Certifying Deaths Due to COVID-19

This information is from CDC's [Guidance for Certifying Deaths Due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(PDF\)](#). See example certifications for deaths due to COVID-19 on pages 4-6 in the guidance above.

### Cause of Death Part I – COVID-19

- If COVID-19 played a role in the death, **specify COVID-19 or Coronavirus Disease 2019**.
  - If a medical certifier reports “coronavirus” alone *without identifying a specific strain or without explicitly excluding COVID-19* the Office of Vital Records will contact the medical certifier.
- In many cases, COVID-19 will be the underlying cause of death (UCOD), as it can lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).
  - Report pneumonia or ARDS (and similar) on the lines *above* COVID-19.
  - *Report COVID-19 on the lowest line used in Part I.*
- If a diagnosis of COVID-19 is suspected or likely “...it is acceptable to report COVID-19 as ‘probable’ or ‘presumed’.”
- If test results for COVID-19 are pending, file the cause of death as “COVID-19, test results pending.” When the test results come back, whether positive or negative for COVID-19, complete the [Request to Change Cause or Manner of Death \(PDF\)](#) form to update the cause of death statement. The Office of Vital Records sends updated records to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) to make national mortality statistics and Minnesota’s mortality data as accurate as possible.

### Cause of Death, Part I – General information

A cause-of-death statement is an informed medical opinion based on sound medical judgment drawn from clinical training and experience, as well as knowledge of current disease states and local trends.

- Report the immediate cause of death on line “a.” The immediate cause of death:
  - Is not necessarily the UCOD.
  - Is not the mechanism of death (for example, cardiac or respiratory arrest).
- Report the sequence of conditions that led directly to death with the most recent condition on line “a.”
- Report the UCOD on the lowest line used in Cause of Death, Part I.
- UCOD means “the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death.”

### Time interval: Onset to Death

For each condition reported in Part I, report the time interval between the presumed onset of the condition (not the diagnosis), and death.

## Cause of Death, Part II

In Part II, report other significant conditions that contributed to the death but are not a part of the sequence in Part I.

- Report only the conditions that actually contributed to death.
- COPD and asthma do not cause COVID-19 “but can increase the risk of contracting a respiratory infection and death.” Report these and similar conditions in Cause of Death, Part II.

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*To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-5970.*