



E: burialandcremation@gov.scot

NHS Death Certification Local Implementation
Leads

27 May 2020

Dear colleagues

Guidance for Medical Practitioners during the COVID-19 Pandemic – Electronic Transfer of Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCD) from Health Services to Registrars and Next of Kin

This communication is intended to supplement the CMO letter [SGHD/CMO\(2020\)15](#).

On 26 March 2020, provisions on remote registration of deaths and still-births in the UK Coronavirus Act 2020 came into force, to prevent unnecessary in-person contact at registration offices.

This means that doctors providing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), or the Certificate of Still-birth, will be expected to ask the person who will be making funeral arrangements which registration office they intend to deal with. The doctor will then send a copy of the certificate to the specified registrar electronically, also copying in the person making the funeral arrangements. This is to ensure that the registrar receives a copy of the MCCD, without which the death cannot be registered. Further information is available from National Records of Scotland (NRS) - <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration/registration-services>

To assist certifying doctors in the remote registration procedure, a number of process charts have been developed for different healthcare settings and these are set out in the annexes below.

We would be grateful if you could bring this guidance to the attention of relevant colleagues in your NHS Boards and enable the dissemination of this information to all doctors in the area as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your help in this matter.

Elizabeth Sadler

**Deputy Director Health Protection Division
Scottish Government**

Rod Burns

**Deputy Registrar General
National Records of Scotland**



REVISED PROCESS FOR COMPLETION OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATES OF CAUSE OF DEATH (MCCD)

PRIMARY CARE

The process of registering deaths in Scotland is changing temporarily during the current pandemic. These changes are explained in detail within the Updated Guidance to Medical Practitioners for Death Certification during the COVID-19 Pandemic, available here: [https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2020\)15.pdf](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2020)15.pdf)

ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT OF KIN THAT DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO AN EMAIL ACCOUNT OR THEY DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE THE MCCD VIA A NON-SECURE EMAIL

It should be recognised that not all citizens will have access to an email account or they do not agree to the MCCD form being emailed to them. In these circumstances, the following applies:

- Steps 1 and 2 of the process should be followed.
- For step 3:
 - The next of kin should be asked which registration office they wish to process the death registration and advised that the MCCD will be emailed to that office
 - The next of kin should be provided with the serial number of the signed MCCD
- For step 4:
 - The scanned MCCD should be emailed to the nominated registration office with the serial number and name of the deceased in the subject line
- Step 5 should be followed

LINKS TO FURTHER GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES:

DCRS:

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/death_certification/questions_and_answers.aspx

NES:

<http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/covid-19/>
<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28674/coronavirus-covid-19/death-and-bereavement>

1

- Complete an eMCCD using SCI Gateway (via EMIS or Vision)
- Print and sign the MCCD

2

- Scan the signed MCCD and store the scanned image file in a locally agreed location. The file should be in PDF format.

3

- Contact the next of kin regarding the deceased by telephone or wait for the next of kin to contact you if you do not have their contact details.
- Ask the next of kin if they wish to see a copy of the MCCD. If they do, inform them that during the Covid pandemic the MCCD can only be sent by email to them but highlight to them that this will be through their normal email route without any additional security around it. If they choose not to have the MCCD emailed, advise them that they will not be able to view the contents of the MCCD and proceed as though they do not have access to an email account – see page 1 of this process guide.
- Add a note to the patient records that reflects the decision of the next of kin - agree to/does not agree to a non-secure email.
- If they do consent to an email, ask the next of kin to send an email to you and provide the email address to send it to. The next of kin should include the name of the nominated registration office they wish to process the death registration
- A list of all local registration offices can be found in the Local Services section of the NRS website:
<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/about-us/service-status>

4

- Check the inbox of the email address supplied to the next of kin.
- When received, select 'Reply', then:
 - Check the list of registration offices (see step 3) for the nominated registration office and copy the email address to the 'To:' field - as well as retaining the email address of the next of kin
 - Add the serial number to the subject line ensuring that the full name of the deceased is included.
 - Attach the MCCD for the deceased as an attachment and select 'Send'

5

- Post the signed original MCCD to the nominated registration office

REVISED PROCESS FOR COMPLETION OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATES OF CAUSE OF DEATH (MCCD)

SECONDARY CARE & PRIMARY CARE OUT OF HOURS SERVICES

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Additional considerations for Secondary Care:

1. Who will carry out the additional administrative activities for deaths during the pandemic?

Consider a small unit, perhaps within medical records and with agreement of bereavement teams, where these additional duties could be completed. This allows for appropriate completion of the MCCD by a certifying doctor and a speedy return to front line duties.

2. Where will scanned images be best stored?

Regardless of who completes step 2, consider a naming convention and a location for scanned images to be stored until the image is used as an attachment in step 5. This enables easy management, compliance with GDPR and subsequent clean up after the temporary measures cease.

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1

- Complete an MCCD (manual pad) and sign it
This step introduces no change to the existing process

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REVISED PROCESS FOR COMPLETION OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATES OF CAUSE OF DEATH (MCCD)

HOSPICES

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- Post the signed original MCCD to the nominated registration office