



## PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE FOR REPORTING COVID-19 DEATHS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is developing guidance to certifiers on reporting deaths due to COVID-19. For the present, please follow the instructions below.

**If you have questions, please contact Center for Health Statistics, Washington State Department of Health at: 1-855-562-1928.**

**1. Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19** should be reported on the death certificate for all decedents where the **disease caused, or is assumed to have caused, or contributed to death.**

Other terminology, e.g., SARS-CoV-2, can be used as long as it is clear that it indicates the 2019 coronavirus strain. CDC would prefer use of WHO’s standard terminology, i.e. COVID-19.

**2. Specification of the causal pathway leading to death is important.** Please report all conditions contributing to death in the “Chain of Events – Etiology” section (Cause of Death tab) in EDRS.

For example, in cases when COVID-19 causes pneumonia and fatal respiratory distress, both pneumonia and respiratory distress should be included along with COVID-19. Certifiers should include as much detail as possible based on their knowledge of the case, medical records, laboratory testing, etc. If the decedent had other chronic conditions such as COPD or asthma that may have also contributed, these conditions can be reported in the field labeled “Other significant conditions contributing to death”.

Here is an example:

**Chain of Events - Etiology**  
*Enter the chain of events - disease, 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.*

<b>* A. Immediate Cause of Death:</b> (Final disease or condition resulting in death.) 120 -- Most recent condition -- <b>Acute respiratory distress syndrome</b>	<b>* Interval between Onset &amp; Death</b> <b>2 days</b>
<b>B. Due To or as a Consequence Of:</b> 120 -- Next oldest condition -- <b>Pneumonia</b>	<b>Interval between Onset &amp; Death</b> <b>10 days</b>
<b>C. Due To or as a Consequence Of:</b> 120 -- Next oldest condition -- <b>COVID-19</b>	<b>Interval between Onset &amp; Death</b> <b>10 days</b>
<b>D. Due To or as a Consequence Of:</b> 120 -- Oldest (original, initiating) condition --	<b>Interval between Onset &amp; Death</b>
<b>Other significant conditions contributing to death:</b> (Not resulting in the underlying cause given above.) 240 <b>COPD, Asthma</b>	