

**From:** [Joyous Van Meter](#)  
**To:** [Maxford Nelsen](#)  
**Cc:** [Veronica Farias](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 10, 2020 12:00:03 PM

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Hello Maxford Nelsen,

Veronica forwarded your question to me. I am the epidemiologist here at Chelan-Douglas, and work with our public health nurses on compiling and reporting all our COVID-19 data. Deaths are counted as a COVID death in Chelan-Douglas if they have a positive COVID PCR test result and have COVID listed on their death certificate (either as a cause or contributing factor).

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Thank you,  
Joyous

**Joyous Van Meter, MPH**

*Public Health Epidemiologist and Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC)*

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**From:** Veronica Farias  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 2:48 PM  
**To:** Joyous Van Meter <[Joyous.VanMeter@cdhd.wa.gov](mailto:Joyous.VanMeter@cdhd.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Counting COVID-19 deaths

Joyous – See question below regarding death counts/criteria.

*Veronica Farias*

[Veronica Farias](#) | Director of Health Communications

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**From:** Maxford Nelsen <[MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com](mailto:MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 1:17 PM  
**To:** Veronica Farias <[Veronica.Farias@cdhd.wa.gov](mailto:Veronica.Farias@cdhd.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Counting COVID-19 deaths

Ms. Farias,

I have a question regarding the Chelan-Douglas Health District's method for counting COVID-19 deaths that I hope you can help me with. Specifically, what criteria does the District use when counting a death as related to COVID-19?

I've so far identified two different methods used by various public health agencies in Washington.

The statewide COVID-19 fatality count publicized by the Washington Department of Health includes any person who tested positive for COVID-19 and subsequently died, even if the death certificate made no mention of COVID-19 as playing a role in the death.

However, I know some county health departments only count deaths of persons who tested positive for COVID-19 *and* died for reasons related to the virus. In [Thurston County](#), for instance, "[a]n individual is counted as a COVID-19 death if they were diagnosed with COVID-19 and died due to health complications related to the illness."

Which method does CDHD County use? Or does it use a different method entirely?

Thanks in advance for your time.

Best,

**Maxford Nelsen**

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