

**From:** [LC Public Health PIO](#)  
**To:** [Maxford Nelsen](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 16, 2020 4:58:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Hello Max,

Thank you for your question. Our Public Information Officer is out today and I am filling in for him. Per our medical response team, we are currently using DOH's definition. They have indicated that it is getting revised, and that the new definition should be available next week. When it is released, we will re-evaluate our cases using the new definition. Hopefully this answers your question.

Thank you and stay healthy,

**Alison Puckett, MPH, CHES®**

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A Safe, Healthy, and Thriving Lewis County



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The Lewis County Public Health & Social Services building in downtown Chehalis is closed to the public until at least April 3, 2020. Staff members are working and available by phone and email during this closure. Go to <https://lewiscountywa.gov/homeservices/> to see which county services are available by phone or online.

**Stay Home, Stay Healthy**

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**From:** Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 16, 2020 3:34 PM  
**To:** LC Public Health PIO <lcphss.pio@lewiscountywa.gov>  
**Subject:** Counting COVID-19 deaths

Lewis County Staff,

I have a question regarding Lewis County's method for counting COVID-19 deaths that I hope you

can help me with. Specifically, what criteria does the county 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 Lewis County use? Or does it use a different method entirely?

Thanks in advance for your time.

Best,

## **Maxford Nelsen**

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