



LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN

Guidance for Medical Practitioners

FAQs for completing Medical Certificates of the Cause of Death & Medical Certificates (Form B) required for Applications for Cremation during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Issued 25th January 2021

MCCDs [“FORM C” OR “FORM A” IN ALDERNEY]

1. Do the special measures apply to deaths not caused, or suspected to be caused, by COVID-19?

Yes. The simplified procedures apply to the certification of all deaths, regardless of the cause of death for so long as current COVID-19 related emergency circumstances prevail.

2. Who can complete the MCCD?

Any registered medical practitioner can complete and sign the MCCD if they are able to state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief, provided that:

- (1) they have attended the deceased in the 28 days prior to their death, or viewed the body in person after death; **OR**
- (2) another medical practitioner has attended the deceased within 28 days of death, or viewed the body in person after death **AND** the medical practitioner who attended the deceased and/or viewed the body is *unable* to sign the MCCD or it is *impractical* for them to do so.

Where the medical practitioner completing the MCCD has not attended the deceased within 28 days before death, or viewed the body themselves, they should provide the name and, where known, GMC registration number of the doctor who attended the deceased or viewed the body and, if possible, when attendance or viewing occurred.

See the Flow Chart on page 4 for further information.

3. What does it mean to have attended the deceased?

It is generally accepted to mean a medical practitioner who has cared for the patient during the illness that led to their death and so is familiar with the patient's medical history, investigations and treatment.

4. What reasons mean that a medical practitioner is "unable to sign" or it is "impractical for them"?

Reasons are fact-specific, but might include: severe pressure of work; the need to ensure medical practitioners with appropriate skills are available to treat patients; and/or medical practitioners becoming infected with COVID-19 and needing to shield or self-isolate. It would be helpful if medical practitioners could note the reason briefly on the MCCD.

5. Does the medical practitioner completing the MCCD need to have seen the body of the deceased?

No. However, a registered medical practitioner must have attended the deceased within 28 days before death and/or have viewed the body in person after death AND the conditions set out at FAQ 2 must be met. See above.

6. What if a medical practitioner cannot state the cause of death to the best of his or her knowledge and belief?

The medical practitioner should contact the Law Officers of the Crown and the police in the usual manner.

7. How should a medical practitioner complete a MCCD?

The MCCD should be completed in the normal way.

The only changes to usual practice are that the medical practitioner might not have seen the deceased's body, or attended the deceased within 28 days of death. In this case, the medical practitioner should complete the line stating, "Last seen by me" by deleting the "me" and filling in the details of the medical practitioner (name and GMC registration number) who attended the deceased or viewed the body, including the date of such attendance or viewing. The declaration that "I was in attendance during the above-named deceased's last illness" can also be deleted if appropriate.

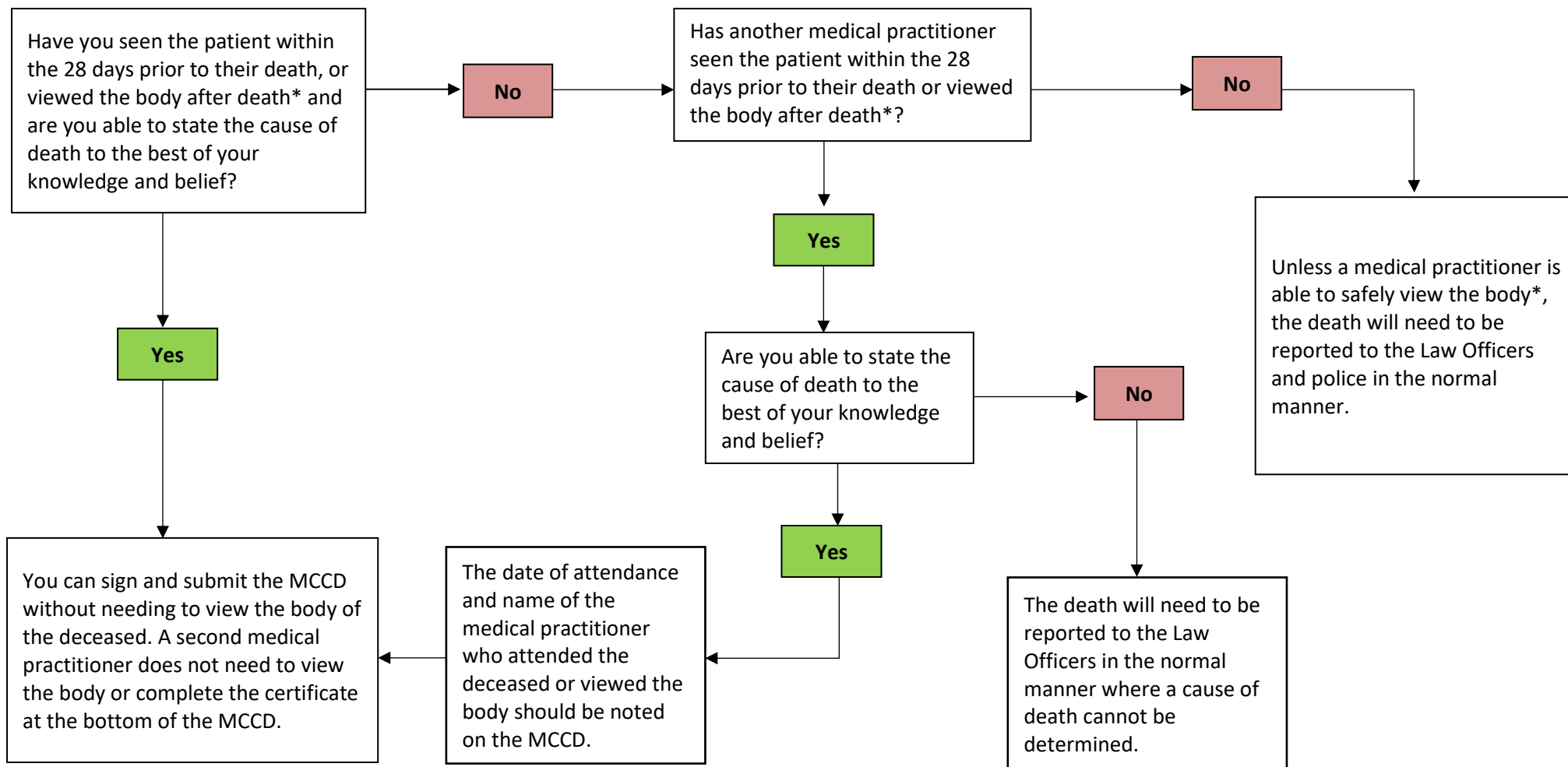
8. Can a medical practitioner state COVID-19 as a cause of death?

Confirmed COVID-19 (where a positive virology test has been received) is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for Part I of the MCCD.

'Probable' or 'possible' COVID-19 is an acceptable underlying cause of death in Part I (b) or (c) of the MCCD, but is not an acceptable cause of death on its own.

Completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (whether or not the death was caused by COVID-19)

Where the cause of death is, or is suspected to be, COVID-19, the Guernsey Local Resilience Forum Guidance should be followed, particularly in respect of safely viewing bodies*.



*Where a medical practitioner wishes to, or is required to view the body of a person whose death is due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19, they should only do so safely and in accordance with the Guidance for Funeral Directors, Medical Staff and others with other key roles on handling deceased persons and their families, published by JESIP and the Guernsey Local Resilience Forum. Please email Coroner@gov.gg if you require a copy of the guidance.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR CREMATIONS

9. Does a medical practitioner need to see a deceased's body in order to complete Form B (the Medical Certificate) in respect of an application for cremation?

A medical practitioner does not necessarily need to have seen the deceased's body for the purpose of completing Form B for cremation applications. They would, however, still need to be able to certify (to the best of their knowledge and belief) the cause of death.

The medical practitioner signing Form B should either:

- (i) have seen the deceased in the 28 days prior to death, or seen the deceased after death; or
- (ii) know that another medical practitioner has seen the deceased in the 28 days prior to death, or has seen the deceased after death. In this case, they should state the name of the medical practitioner who saw the deceased 28 days prior to death and the date of their attendance in their answer to question 7 on Form B, together with the reason why that other medical practitioner is unable to sign or it is impractical for them to do so, at the top of Form B (please refer to the answer to question 3 for appropriate reasons).

Form C (Confirmatory Medical Certificate) is not required for cremation applications whilst the current COVID-19 related emergency circumstances prevail.

10. Do special measures applicable to certification of death (Form B) and this Guidance apply to all cremation applications or only those in which the death was caused, or suspected to be caused, by COVID-19?

Yes. The simplified procedures apply to completion of certificates for all cremation applications, regardless of the cause of death whilst the current COVID-19 related emergency circumstances prevail.

For more detailed information, medical practitioners are advised to refer to the guidance available at:

<http://www.guernseylawofficers.gg/article/163197/Coronial-Functions>

Alternatively, please contact the Law Officers of the Crown at coroner@gov.gg or on 01481-743737