

## Law and statutory requirements

<b>1</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
A	Detailed knowledge of the processes required to certify and register a death in the UK	Ability to apply relevant legal principles to specific cases	
B	Knowledge of relevant legislation and case law pertaining to data confidentiality and disclosure, the certification of death and the registration of death	Ability to apply relevant legal principles to specific cases	Maintains full compliance with the law while recognizing the need to deal sensitively with the bereaved in areas where discretion exists
C	Knowledge of relevant legislation and case law pertaining to the work of coroners	Ability to apply relevant legal principles to specific cases, especially in relation to distinguishing between natural and unnatural causes of death	Maintains full compliance with the law while recognizing the need to deal sensitively with the bereaved in areas where discretion exists
D	Knowledge of relevant aspects of the Human Tissue Act 2004 and guidance issued by the Human Tissue Authority	Ability to apply relevant legal principles to specific cases	Maintains full compliance with the law while recognizing the need to deal sensitively with the bereaved in areas where discretion exists
E	Knowledge of the law and regulations in relation to deaths of any persons who died abroad and whose bodies are returned to England and Wales	Ability to apply relevant legal principles to specific cases	
F	Knowledge of the law and regulations in relation to deaths of any persons who died in England or Wales but whose relatives wish to transport the body abroad for disposal	Ability to apply relevant legal principles to specific cases	
G	Knowledge of the public health implications of serious infective diseases (e.g. notifiable infections)		
H	Knowledge of the appropriate standards of record-keeping	Keeps appropriate and accurate records	

## Scrutiny of death

2	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
A	Knowledge of national guidance on the appropriate procedures for initiating investigation of deaths. Knowledge of guidance on the information to be recorded in every case	Can collect and evaluate relevant basic information and understand its significance.	Seeks relevant answers to questions from appropriate sources, with minimum distress to relatives
B	Basic but broad understanding of what represents appropriate and inappropriate medical treatment in a wide variety of situations; including procedures, drugs, cross-reactions and potential complications (including healthcare-associated infections)	Can identify situations where treatment may have been inappropriate and/or contributed to death; can seek independent specialist advice to clarify this question where necessary, especially in the context of unusual treatments or complications. Makes any necessary further investigations quickly and discreetly.	Is aware of the need to refer rapidly to the Coroner if doubts about the appropriateness of care are not rapidly dispelled
C	Knowledge of national guidance on the appropriate level of investigation that should be pursued in different circumstances.	Ability to detect ‘warning signals’ that indicate a need for more detailed investigation.	Appreciates that the investigative role of the medical examiner is limited, and that investigation of circumstance other than natural causes is the remit of the coroner or other agencies Seeks to be proportionate in the level of scrutiny, neither prolonging investigations that are unlikely to be fruitful nor abbreviating any justified investigation, whether as a result of pressure from outside or as a result of pressure of work.
D	Knowledge of the circumstances under which, in accordance with legislation and case law, a death must be reported to, and investigated by, a coroner.	Ability to interpret legislation, case law and guidance in a consistent and logical manner. Applies appropriate tests of evidence in a consistent and legally acceptable manner in order to reach such decisions Has an appreciation of the appropriate	Communicates rapidly and efficiently with the coroner. Seeks to maintain consistent standards while recognizing the needs and wishes of different ethnic groups.

		level of suspicion or evidence that should lead to discussion or to immediate referral to the coroner, following national guidance	
E	Knowledge and understanding of potential sources of relevant information (including interviews with relatives, other medical staff, medical databases etc.)	Ability to evaluate the potential value of such additional sources in specific cases. Ability to access and use such relevant sources of information	
F	Knowledge of the value, limitations and health & safety implications of external examination of the body	Ability to conduct an appropriate external examination of the body	
G	Knowledge of the procedure of post-mortem examination	Can advise on whether or not a post-mortem examination is likely to produce useful information regarding the cause of death	Seeks to minimise the use of investigations that are unlikely to produce useful information
H	Understands the role and limitation of the Medical Examiner Support Officer	Can work efficiently and effectively with Medical Examiner Support Officers	Facilitates effective team working
I		Can identify potential conflicts of interest	Seeks to avoid conflicts of interest

### Death certification

<b>3</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
A	Knowledge of the processes and documents used for the certification of death		
B	Knowledge of the circumstances under which a doctor can lawfully complete and sign a death certificate	Can explain the statutory requirements to others	Seeks to minimise distress when the requirements of the law are contrary to the wishes of the relatives
C	Knows the requirements of legislation and guidance from relevant UK and international authorities in relation to the certification of death	Can summarise appropriately the circumstances leading to death into the required format on the death certificate, in all deaths where investigation by the Coroner is not required, including deaths	Seeks to be consistent over time and with national guidance

		caused by complex multifactorial interacting processes. Can use the distinction between Part 1 and Part 2 appropriately.	
D	Has an understanding of acceptable medical nomenclature in the context of death certification	Can classify causes of death appropriately, without using non-standard or misleading terminology	Seeks to supply consistent and meaningful data that is compatible with national analysis systems
E	Understands the level of uncertainty that is acceptable in death certification	Can translate this uncertainty into clear language (written and verbal) to enable an understanding of it by others.	Seeks to minimise uncertainty without causing unnecessary expense or distress to relatives or healthcare professionals
F	Knowledge of appropriate procedures if further information comes to light after a death certificate has been issued	Applies good judgement as to whether new information justifies re-opening a case	

## Working with coroners

<b>4</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
A	Knowledge of how a coroner's office functions	Ability to identify and interact appropriately with the coroner and other members of the coroner's team	
B	Has an understanding of the circumstances of death that require referral to the coroner	Applies appropriate and consistent judgement, in accordance with precedent and national guidance, in cases where the need to involve the coroner is not immediately clear	Seeks appropriate advice in cases where the best course of action is still unclear. Resists inappropriate pressure from relatives, clinicians or others in relation to whether or not to refer a death to the coroner
C	Knowledge of common medical procedures and drugs, and major complications thereof	Ability to explain complex medical procedures and their complications in simple language. Can identify the need for and appropriate sources of more specialist medical advice	Seeks to communicate effectively. Readily acknowledges limits of personal expertise.
D	Understands the difference circumstances under which a coroner may order a post-		

	mortem examination; knowledge of the law governing post-mortem examinations		
E	Understands the duties of the pathologist in reporting to HM coroner		

## Interaction with bereaved people

5	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
A	Basic knowledge of the psychology of bereavement and loss	Able to communicate effectively with the recently bereaved, especially in relation to explaining the content and purpose of the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death and the role of the coroner. Able to manage appropriately situations where family members are distressed or angry	Is sympathetic and seeks to minimize distress, while insisting on satisfying statutory requirements
B	Knowledge of law and good practice in relation to confidentiality as applied to the deceased and bereaved people	Avoids inappropriate disclosure of confidential information. Can identify situations where disclosure of information to some family members might be inappropriate.	
C	Understands the need for easy communication channels and minimum delay	Establishes local mechanisms for rapid and simple communication	Seeks to be as available to relatives as possible
D	Knowledge of the information needs of other staff who will interact with the bereaved	Able to ensure that other members of staff have appropriate, accurate and timely information about the deceased	Seeks to avoid relatives being presented with conflicting or ambiguous information by different members of staff
E	Knowledge of the standard requirements of major ethnic and religious groups in relation to their procedures around death and disposal of the body.	Can explain causes of death and the procedures around the registration of death and disposal of the body in terms that can be understood by lay persons, even when distressed by bereavement	Seeks to comply with religious requirements in as far as this can be achieved while not compromising the standards of investigation of death. Seeks to avoid bias between different groups in respect of data collection.
F	Knowledge of the law and guidance in relation to consent for post mortem	Is able to explain to relatives sensitively and appropriately what information a post-	Seeks to complete investigation and certification as quickly as is consistent

	examinations; knowledge of post mortem procedures, benefits and limitations.	mortem examination might provide in a specific case, and to seek consent for a post mortem examination in cases where referral to the coroner is not a legal requirement but the relatives are considering whether such information might be valuable to them	with the stated aims of the system
G	Knowledge of procurement systems for tissue and organ transplantation, donation for research and other situations where there may be a wish that the body of the bereaved might be used for the good of others; the requirements of relevant laws and the involvement of the coroner service	Able to explain to relatives relevant aspects of tissue and organ donation, and to request and document appropriate consent where appropriate	Seeks to ensure that tissue and organ retrieval systems are used fully for the benefit of others, but are not abused.
H	Understands what the bereaved can reasonably expect from the medical examiner service	Satisfies reasonable demands but is able to explain, without generating antagonism, why unreasonable demands cannot be satisfied.	
I	Is aware when a cause of death may have implications for the health of the relatives	Is able to refer relatives to appropriate specialists when indicated.	
J	Understands the need to be open and explain clearly when mistakes have been made	Can communicate with relatives clearly and appropriately about mistakes, though without compromising any work of the coroner, if involved	Seeks to be open and honest
K	Knowledge of support systems available for the bereaved; both general and disease-specific, spiritual and practical	As part of a team, can help to evaluate support needs of the bereaved and tactfully suggest possible sources of support.	

## Disposal of the body

6	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
A	Has knowledge of the various possible methods of disposal of the body and the	Can communicate these options appropriately and sensitively	Seeks to assist the bereaved in satisfying these requirements while simultaneously

	statutory and procedural requirements associated with each		ensuring that death investigation and the standard of data collection are not compromised
--	--	--	---

## Clinical Governance and Public Health

7	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
A	Knowledge of NHS clinical governance systems. Understands the various procedures available for reporting, investigating and correcting sub-standard clinical performance.	Applies good judgement in deciding whether an unproven suspicion of a deficiency in care justifies further investigation, and by whom Can interact appropriately with and provide information for NHS clinical governance systems.	Seeks to act proportionately, as circumstances demand, to ensure relevant action is taken to protect patients
B	Basic understanding of how good data collection is important for subsequent statistical analysis		Seeks to ensure that data used for this purpose is appropriate and not biased
C	Knowledge of arrangements for reporting notifiable and other serious infective diseases		
D	Knowledge of arrangements for management of major incidents		
E	Knowledge of arrangements for the management of pandemic influenza		
	Knowledge of the system of confidential enquiries		
	Knowledge of systems to maintain the quality of service provided by Medical Examiners	Undertakes appropriate CPD and self-audit. Participates appropriately in appraisal and recertification processes	Seeks to maintain and improve the quality of service provided by the Medical Examiner's office

## Teaching and training

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
Basic knowledge of appropriate teaching methods appropriate for different situations, from single individuals to large groups	Can successfully transmit relevant knowledge and skills using a variety of relevant approaches	Seeks to improve the skills of others at every possible opportunity
Understands training requirements of various categories of staff in relation to procedures around the time of death	Can assist with the delivery of relevant training to other professional group as required	Seeks to enhance the skills and team working abilities of all those involved in the death certification process

## Death in childhood

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
Knowledge of the differences in law and guidance relating to deaths of children	Can interpret and apply the law in an appropriate manner in relevant circumstances	Seeks to minimise distress while maintaining compliance with the law
Recognises the special aspects and sensitivities around the death of a child	Is able to interview bereaved parents in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Recognises the limits of his/her own skills in this respect and understands the potential contribution of suitably trained staff	Seeks to collaborate with paediatricians and to minimise distress for parents. Seeks specialist help as appropriate if interactions with bereaved parents demand specialist skills
Knowledge of the remit and working practices of the Local Safeguarding Children Board	Collaborates with the Safeguarding Children Board	Seeks to identify and prevent dangers to other children