



Guidance on the Coronavirus Act 2020: implications for death certification, registration and cremation forms

4 April 2020

The [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) made changes to legislation about how deaths can be certified and registered during the pandemic. Guidance has also been issued about infection control and the precautions that should be taken for different activities.

Infection control and PPE

Public Health England guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus, including information about PPE

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19

Public Health England guidance on infection prevention and control

www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control#handling-dead-bodies

Death certification and cremation forms

NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance to medical practitioners relating to changes in death certification, registration and cremation forms

<https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/6590/COVID-19-act-excess-death-provisions-info-and-guidance-31-march.pdf>

RCPATH flowchart for who can complete a death certificate or cremation form if the attending practitioner is not available (please also see above guidance)

www.rcpath.org/uploads/assets/742a20f2-f0d3-4e46-8a76843c32882cbf/G213-MCCD-completion-during-COVID-19-outbreak-flowchart.pdf

Home Office and Office for National Statistics guidance for doctors completing Medical Certificates of Cause of Death in England and Wales

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877007/guidance-for-doctors-completing-medical-certificates-of-cause-of-death-covid-19.pdf

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General Register Office Circular No.5/2020

www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/wp-content/library/GROCircular-5-2020.pdf

General Register Office Instructions for Implementation of the Coronavirus (Emergency) Act 2020

www.rcpath.org/uploads/assets/2ea3b617-cd76-49a4-bbac82322643243a/GRO-Circular-5-2020.pdf

Ministry of Justice set of guidance for every stage of completion of forms relating to cremation, including guidance for medical practitioners and crematorium referees

www.gov.uk/government/collections/cremation-forms-and-guidance

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Cremation Society, Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, and Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management joint statement about changes to cremation forms

www.cremation.org.uk/content/files/Joint%20Statement%20on%20Coronavirus%20Act%202020.pdf

Working with the Coroner

Chief Coroner guidance on COVID-19

www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Chief-Coroner-Guidance-No.-34-COVID-19_26_March_2020-.pdf

Chief Coroner summary of the Coronavirus Act 2020 – provisions relevant to Coroners

www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Chief-Coroners-Office-Summary-of-the-Coronavirus-Act-2020-30.03.20.pdf

Ministry of Justice revised notification of death regulations – when to refer a death to the Coroner

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878083/revised-guidance-for-registered-medical-practitioners-on-the-notification-of-deaths-regulations.pdf

Background to the Act

Coronavirus Act 2020 – see Schedules 13 and 14 for information on to Registration of Deaths

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted/data.htm

Department of Health and Social Care guidance: What the Coronavirus Bill will do

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do/what-the-coronavirus-bill-will-do

Department of Health and Social Care impact assessment

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-summary-of-impacts/coronavirus-bill-summary-of-impacts

Other useful resources

Association of Anatomical Pathology Technologists COVID-19 resource page –

www.aaptuk.org/professional-support/covid19resources

Health and Safety Executive – www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm

National Association of Funeral Directors – <https://nafd.org.uk>