

REPORTABLE DEATHS

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR DOCTORS AND NURSES

Prior to notification to the Coroner, the doctor should discuss the case with a more senior clinician or his/her deputy.

A death should be reported to HM Coroner if:

- It cannot readily be certified as being due to natural causes within the provisions of the Registration Act (see form of certificate)
- The deceased was not seen by a doctor either within the last 14 days prior to death or after death
- There is any element of suspicious circumstances
- There is any history of violence
- The death may be linked to an incident (whenever it occurred)
- Sudden infant death
- There is any question of self neglect or neglect by others
- The death has occurred or the illness arisen during or shortly after detention in police or prison custody (including voluntary attendance at a police station under PACE)
- The deceased was detained under the Mental Health Act
- The death was linked with an abortion
- The death may have been contributed to by the actions of the deceased person (eg overdose, self-injury, history of drug addiction or solvent abuse)
- The deceased was receiving any form of war pension or industrial disability pension unless the death can be shown to be wholly unconnected
- The death could be due to industrial disease or related in any way to the deceased's employment
- The death was within 24 hours of admission to hospital
- The death was during an operation or before full recovery from the effects of anaesthetic or was in any way related to the anaesthetic. (In any event a death within 24 hours should normally be referred)
- The death may be related to a medical procedure or treatment, whether invasive or not
- The death may be due to lack of medical care
- There are any other unusual or disturbing features to the case
- It may be wise to report any death where there is an allegation of medical mis-management

This note is for guidance only: it is not exhaustive and in part represents the desired local practice rather than statutory requirement.

If in any doubt contact the Coroner's Office for further advice. The best time to contact the Coroner's Office is in the morning and this can be done at the Bereavement Co-ordinator's Office (Tel 01274 364477 BRI or 01274 365210 SLH)

If necessary, the Coroner's Office can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Out-of-hours contact should be made via the Police on 0845 6060606, and the number requested for the on-call Coroner's office.

Mr R Whittaker, HM Coroner for West Yorkshire