



The revised Notification of Deaths Regulations (2019)

The Notification of Deaths Regulations (2019) came into force on 1 October 2019, a link to the associated Statutory Instrument can be found here and the Ministry of Justice's guidance on complying with the new regulations can be found here.

The new regulations place doctors under an obligation to notify the 'relevant senior coroner' (which means the senior coroner appointed for the area) of deaths in prescribed circumstances.

Which deaths should be notified to the senior coroner?

The prescribed circumstances can be summarised as when a doctor suspects that a person's death was due to:

Exposure to a toxic substance.

The use of a medicinal product.

Trauma or injury.

Self-harm.

Neglect (including self-neglect).

A treatment or procedure of a medical nature.

A disease attributed to the patient's employment (throughout their lifetime).

An unnatural cause outside those specified above.

There are further obligations to report the following deaths:

When the cause of death is unknown.

Deaths in custody or state detention.

When there is no 'attending medical practitioner (defined as the deceased registered medical practitioner) or the attending medical practitioner' is not available within a reasonable timeframe.

When the identity of the deceased is not known.

Notifying the senior coroner

The death should be notified to the senior coroner as soon 'as it is reasonably practicable to do so' and there is a new obligation to notify the senior coroner in writing (albeit in exceptional circumstances it may be justifiable to notify the senior coroner verbally).

Furthermore, there is an obligation to provide the following if the information is available:

The demographic details of the notifying doctor (including the name, postal address, email address and telephone contact number).

Demographic details of the deceased (including the name, date of birth, sex, address, occupation).

The name address of the next of kin.

The prescribed circumstances that have led to the notification (please refer to the above list).

The place, date and time of death.

If the deceased is under 18, the name and address of a parent/personal with parental responsibility.

The name of any consultant who attended the patient within 14 days of their death.

Any other relevant information.

This introduces an extra administrative burden at what can already be a challenging time. On a practical note, some coroners have developed an online portal for the notification of deaths hence you should use this wherever possible.

Otherwise, Londonwide LMCs have produced the attached notification template (on a practical note, the coroner's officer would be best placed to provide you with the contact details of the senior coroner for your area).

Template email

Dear [Insert name of Senior Coroner]

I am notifying you of a death in accordance with my obligations under the Notification of Death Regulations (2019).

I trust that the below information will be of assistance to you but please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any other information or clarification.

My details

[Name]

[Postal address]

[Telephone number]

[Email]

Deceased person's details

[Name]

[Date of birth]

[Date and approximate time of death]

[Place of death]

[Sex]

[Address]

[Occupation]

Next of kin details

[Insert the details of the next of kin. If there is no next of kin, this should be the person responsible for the deceased or a parent/person with parental responsibility if the deceased is under the age of 18.]

Reason for notification

[Provide a brief explanation as to the circumstances of the death that have led you to conclude that the death is notifiable under the provisions of the Notification of Death Regulations (2019) – the provisions are set out at Section 3(1) of the Statutory Instrument, a link to which can be found [here](#).]

Other information

[If the person was cared for by a consultant within the 14 days prior to their death, then you should highlight this to the senior coroner and provide the name of the consultant.]

[You should provide any information you think may be relevant.]

Yours etc