Verification of death procedure in Covid-19 pandemic for RNs

Was the patient’s death expected?

Yes

Is there a DNACPR in place?

No

Refer to medical practitioner, may need coroner review. Patient must have been seen by a doctor in the last 28 days

No

There is no requirement for a DNACPR to be in place during the Covid-19 crisis and verification can be completed by RN

Are you a RN competent in the verification procedure?

No

Contact St Christopher’s or local palliative care team for further advice

Yes

Is there a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of Covid-19

No

Follow universal infection control procedures

Yes

Wear standard PPE during verification procedure

Follow procedure for verification of expected death

Document and pass information to funeral directors. Covid-19 positive or suspected patients may require burial if device cannot be safely removed

Does the patient have a medical implantable device?

CHECK NOTES

No

Consider possible aids for grieving relatives who are unable to say goodbye. Be able to describe the scene

Yes

Are family members present?

No

Explain procedure and afterwards confirm with family members that death is verified. Explain to family that verification is the official time of death, not the last breath taken*

Yes

Does the patient have a medical implantable device?

Verification procedure

• Does the patient have a carotid pulse? Check for one full minute
• Can heart sounds be heard with a stethoscope? Check for one full minute
• Can breath sounds be heard? Listen for one full minute
• Are pupils are fixed and dilated? (not reacting to light – use a pen torch)

Verification of expected death will require the nurse to assess the patient for a minimum of five minutes to establish that irreversible cardio-respiratory arrest has occurred, as well as specific additional observations. Any spontaneous return of cardiac or respiratory activity during this period of observation should prompt further five minutes observations.

After death is verified

• Complete the pro forma (see next page), leave this form with the patient and add a copy to the local record
• Notify medical practitioner who will issue medical certificate of death
• Patient’s body can be moved to a mortuary.

References

• Royal College of Nursing. Confirmation of verification of death by registered nurses. Available at www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/confirmation-of-death
• House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 08860 25 March 2020 Coronavirus Bill: Managing the deceased
• Department of Health and Social Care, Coronavirus bill: summary of impacts, 19 March 2020, Section 4 – Managing the deceased.
### Verification of death form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient name</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHS number</td>
<td>Date of birth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time of death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of death</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People present at time of death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Verification of death

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Pupils fixed and dilated</td>
<td>Death verified by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No pulse detected for one minute</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No respiratory effort for one minute</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is patient fitted with a pacemaker or defibrillator? ☐ Yes ☐ No

People contacted at time of death

Any other comments

Please scan the completed form to your electronic document system.

[www.stchristophers.org.uk](http://www.stchristophers.org.uk)