

## SECTION 23 REPORT OF DEATH FORM

### I. REPORT OF DEATH

The coroner ROD should be completed by the county C/DC for each death that is reported whether or not jurisdiction is accepted. The ROD is the first record of the investigation of any death investigated by the C/DC. The ROD form serves multiple roles in that it provides a single location for all demographic information, scene investigation, and narrative summary information needed. It documents next of kin notification, and it is the record of the investigation to be sent to the ALDFS.

The ROD is a two page form that is largely self-explanatory and can be completed by either the C/DC with all available information. The full, complete, accurate, and timely recording of information on this report and its accompanying forms (SUIDI, SUDCR, Medication log) is necessary for all stakeholders in the medicolegal death investigation system to perform their duties as assigned by law. (See Appendix C)

The ROD should be completed within 48hrs post DOD. If the decedent requires a postmortem exam, the ROD should be completed by the end of the C/DC shift.

## Minimum Information Requirements

- County of Death
- Decedent Demographics (Name, DOB, Gender, Race)
- Type of Death
- Identification (Method, Viewed Information)
- Death Pronounced (Date, Time)
- Death in Jail / Police Custody
- Drugs Suspected (Yes/No)
- Brief Narrative of Circumstances Surrounding Death
- Body Viewed by Medical Examiner (Yes/No)
- Presumed Cause and Manner of Death
- Date of Investigation
- Name/Signature of CM/MDI
- Order for Autopsy (Yes/No)

## Jurisdiction Declined Cases

- County of Death
- Decedent Demographics (Name, DOB, Gender, Race)
- Type of Death (Indicate Jurisdiction Declined)
- Date Pronounced (Date, Time)
- Brief Narrative of Circumstances Surrounding Death
- Presumed Cause of Death
- Manner of Death
- Date of Investigation
- Name/Signature of C/DC

## Completing the ROD

The following line-by-line explanation of the meaning and the scope of each portion of the form is provided to encourage more consistent completion, which will increase the current and future value of the data.

**Case Number:** The case number assigned by the county medical examiner's office. If no case number is assigned, leave blank. Suggested format would include: 2 DIGIT YEAR - COUNTY CASE NUMBER (e.g. 16-001)

**County of Death:** Self-explanatory.

### Demographic Information:

- **NAME** - Include legal name (first, middle, last) excluding nicknames. When possible submit official ID
- **RACE** - Self-explanatory
- **AGE** - Chronological age; if less than two years can delineate in months
- **SEX** – Self-explanatory
- **RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS** – use full “911” permanent address of the decedent or their parents if a minor. Include zip code when possible.

**Indication for Medical Examiner Investigation:** Indicate most appropriate type of death/reason case was reported.

**Identification of Body:** Detail exact method of identification. If identified by a person, list full name, address, phone number, and relationship to deceased.

### Information about Decedent and Description of Body:

- **DATE OF BIRTH:** Self-explanatory.
- **MARITAL STATUS:** Self-explanatory. While many laws concerning marriage have changed in the past several years, Alabama does not recognize common law marriage unless the marriage was legally contracted

- HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Self-explanatory. Indicate YES or NO.
- OCCUPATION: Self-explanatory. If the decedent's death was related to employment note type of job being performed in narrative.
- BODY TEMPERATURE: Judge temperature by touch in locations adjacent to ambient air (e.g., Not under blankets, against surfaces, etc.). COLD- COOL - WARM
- DECOMPOSITION: Self-explanatory, check box EARLY, ADVANCED, or NONE.
- RIGOR MORTIS: Self-explanatory. Rigor can be defined as absent (0), easily broken (1), broken with moderate force (2), or cannot be broken at all or without considerable force (3).
- JAIL/POLICE CUSTODY: Self-explanatory, check box YES or NO.
- BLOOD/FROTH: Note the locations of obvious blood flow or froth (foam cone) from orifices of the head and on clothing, including the color.
- OTHER: In cases of suspected asphyxia make note (e.g., dirt, water, etc.).
- LIVOR MORTIS: Self-explanatory. Indicate presence, ABSENT, BLANCHABLE, FIXED, and position, ANTERIOR or POSTERIOR.

## Information about Occurrence

- INJURY OR ONSET OF ILLNESS: This is the physical address of where the decedent was first injured or began to show the first signs of illness. Note whether the decedent was on the job and/or the premise type (e.g., mobile home, apartment, warehouse, highway, etc.).
- LAST KNOWN TO BE ALIVE: Location refers to location where decedent was last known alive. If contact via telephone, text, email, this should be noted.
- FOUND DEAD (BY): This is the first person to discover the victim deceased or believed to be deceased. In the narrative, describe the relationship between discovering party and the decedent if one existed. The address refers to where decedent was when discovered either deceased or believed to be deceased. Do not include hospital if decedent was transported for pronouncement of death.
- POLICE NOTIFIED: This should be when law enforcement was contacted about the death. Police Agency is the investigating law enforcement agency.
- INVESTIGATOR/PHONE- Number is the law enforcement agency investigator. This is especially important when follow-up information is required.

- EMS TRANSPORT TO ER: This will include EMS transport for death pronouncement. NOTE: Any Lab Specimens collected should be sent with body if autopsy service requested.
- DEATH PRONOUNCED: The exact time of death is known for certainty usually only in those cases of witnessed death. In most cases, "time since death" is an estimation based on when the individual was last seen alive or found dead, and the degree of postmortem change.
- TOXICOLOGY ORDERED: Do not draw toxicology specimens if sending for autopsy.

**Means of Death (Agency or Object) – IF OTHER THAN NATURAL**

Motor Vehicle – self explanatory

Gun – self explanatory

Other Instrument – self explanatory

Surgically Treated – self explanatory

Drug, Poison, Chemical (suspected) – self explanatory

**Medical History**

Condition – self-explanatory. Indicate all that apply.

Family Physician (Attending Physician) – List all known treating physicians. Please include as much information as available for case pathologist if autopsy service is requested. Medications – The medication log should be used for a detailed list of prescribed medications and included with the

**ROD**

**Next of Kin:** Next-of-kin in order of:

1. The attorney-in-fact pursuant to a durable power of attorney for health care.
2. The spouse of the decedent.
3. The decedent's surviving adult children. T
4. A parent of the decedent.
5. An adult sibling of the decedent.
6. An adult grandchild of the decedent.
7. The grandparent of the decedent.
8. A guardian of the decedent at the time of the decedent's death.

**Funeral Home:** If known, list name and phone number of funeral home chosen by legal next of kin to whom the decedent is to be sent at the completion of all examinations and investigation.

**Narrative Summary:** Detail all factual information pertinent to this case that has not already been described in the previous questions. This narrative should give a clear description of the circumstances surrounding the death and how the death came about. A thorough report is better; remember WHO, WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE when describing the scene and circumstances.

**Cause and Manner of Death:**

Presumed Cause of Death: Indicate the preliminary or final cause of death.

Manner of Death: Five (5) choices include Natural, Homicide, Accident, Suicide, and Undetermined.

Pending may be used as an interim manner of death but should be changed once investigation and testing are complete.

**Coroner /MDI:** For county where death occurred.

**Next of Kin Notification:** Coroner is responsible for notifying the Next of Kin (NOK) of the death; the C/MDI is responsible for notifying the NOK of the impending autopsy. Indicate if NOK was notified that an autopsy has been ordered.

## **CASE REVIEWS**

Reports of Death, Autopsy and Toxicology reports should be reviewed by Coroner or Chief Deputy Coroner as they are released, to ensure accurate statements and facts.

Before certification of death, all cases will undergo a case review by Coroner or Chief Deputy Coroner.

This review will ensure the completeness of the case file (all documents are labeled and attached). Documents include: Report of Death, Autopsy Report, Toxicology Report, Receipt of Body, pictures, SUDI form, medical records, IO reports, and any other report that may help determine cause and manner of death.