

Inquests: What, When, How

Hon. Brad Cummings

Hon. Derek Lawless

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Inquest Resources

TJCTC Resources

- Inquest Deskbook
- Recordings for Credit
- Self-Paced Modules
- Forms
- Charts & Checklists

Statutes

- Health and Safety Code Ch. 193
- Code of Criminal Procedure Ch. 49

Dept. State Health Services (DSHS)

- TxEver
- Death Reporting Guides

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www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/writing-cause-of-death-statements.htm

- Training on Cause of Death
- Instructions for cause of death section
- Handbooks
- Tips for Common Problems
- Cause of Death App for your phone
- <https://www.medicinenet.com/medterms-medical-dictionary/article.htm>

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www.dshs.texas.gov/vs/partners/txever-guides/#user

TxEVER and User Guides

➤ Help desk

TxEVER help desk - help-txever@dshs.texas.gov

1-888-963-7111

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What is an Inquest?

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What is an Inquest?

An investigation and determination of **cause and manner** of death.

Formal definition: *Chapter 49.01(2) Code of Criminal Procedure*

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Why are Inquests Performed?

- Legal requirements
- Checks on other agencies
- To determine what happened
- Recordkeeping
- Voice of the deceased

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Death Certification ...But Why?

- Legal documentation
- Life expectancy
- Funding
- Identifying disparities
- Epidemiology
- Insurance
- At risk activities
- Mortality rate

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Pronouncement vs. Certification

The person who pronounces death may not necessarily be the same person that certifies the death.

Pronounces death: EMS, Hospital staff, law enforcement, lay persons

A JP never pronounces death. JP will not determine **if** the person died, they determine **how** the person died.

Certifies death: either the justice of the peace, medical examiner, or doctor completes the death certificate

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What Does Cause and Manner Mean?

Cause: The reason a death occurs.

The disease, injury, drug toxicity, or combination of factors that causes a physical disorder severe enough to result in death.

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Manner of Death - How a death occurred

4 Categories

- **Natural**
Deaths due to illnesses or conditions (such as heart attacks or cancer) rather than external causes
Natural deaths are the only types of deaths that a physician can certify
- **Accident**
Fall off a ladder
Snake bite
Motor Vehicle Crash
- **Homicide**
One person kills another person
Does not have to be criminal (i.e. self-defense shooting is still homicide)
- **Suicide**
Intentional taking of one's own life
- **Indeterminate**
Only use when it is **IMPOSSIBLE** to determine the manner of death

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Examples

Cause: Gunshot to the head
Manner: Suicide

Cause: Drowning
Manner: Accidental

Cause: Stab wound to the chest
Manner: Homicide

Many Webinars on this topic and we will discuss more later!

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Why do JPs do Inquests?!

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Death Investigation Systems

Medical Examiner System

- Forensic Pathologist
- Appointed
- 15 in Texas
- Population \geq 2 Million

Coroner System

- Not usually a physician
- Elected
- Mostly JPs

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Medical Examiner System

Advantages

- Quality
- Training
- Budget
- Uniformity

Disadvantages

- Manpower
- Recruitment/retention
- Pecuniary pressure
- Education Required

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Coroner System (JPs)

Advantages

- Financially feasible
- Autonomy
- Judicial powers
- Preservation of dignity

Disadvantages

- Medical proficiency
- Monetary restraints
- Education
- Misdiagnosis

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When is an Inquest Required?

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Code of Criminal Procedure 49.04

Deaths Requiring an Inquest

-
- Death in prison
 - Body or body part is found and cause and manner of death is unknown
 - Unidentified
 - Unlawful means
 - Suicide
 - Unattended by a physician
 - Child younger than six
 - The attending physician requests the J.P. to certify

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What is an expected death?

A child's death is expected if it is:

- Due to a congenital (*condition that is present from birth*) or neoplastic (*condition that causes tumor growth*) disease
- or
- Caused by an infectious disease,
- Not acquired as the result of trauma or poisoning,
- Is identified using standard medical procedures, and
- Is not reportable to DSHS under Ch 81

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Responsibility for an Inquest

You are responsible for performing the inquests for **all** deaths that occur in your precinct. (TX CCP ART 49.07)

Wait?! I am responsible for every death in my precinct
24/7/365????

Good news! Most counties have an “**on-call**” schedule rotation, and a judge will cover the whole county while they are on-call and not be responsible for any inquests while not on-call.

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What if the JP is Unavailable

What if we don't have an "on-call" rotation, and I'm not available when a body is found in my precinct?

Any JP in your county may perform the inquest.

What if no JP in my county is available?

The **county judge** may be called to perform the inquest.
(within 5 days transfer information to the J.P.)

If another JP from your county or your county judge is not available, then a JP from another county may be contacted to do an "**inquest bench exchange**" and begin the inquest.

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Inquest Bench Exchange

The inquest bench exchange agreement should be in writing and signed.

This can also be a useful tool in the event of a mass fatality incident to bring in more judges to help with multiple bodies

A JP from another county may apply to your commissioners court for mileage reimbursement

*-Government Code Sec. 27.0545 & Code of Criminal Procedure
Art. 49.07(c)(3)*

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Inquest Bench Exchange

If a judge **from another county** initiates the inquest, the judge **must** transfer all information to the justice of the peace of the precinct where the body was found within **5 days**

That JP then completes the inquest, including the death certificate

This is **not** necessary if a JP from a different precinct in the county where the body was found does the inquest.

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.07(c)

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What is the Process for an Inquest?

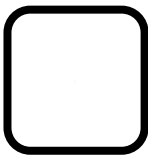
26

Before you are Notified

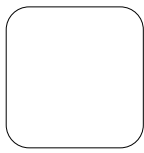
What do you need before you ever get notified?

27

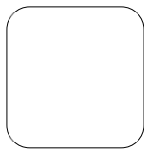
Process of an Inquest



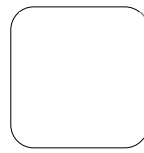
You are notified:
dispatch, law
enforcement or
a medical facility



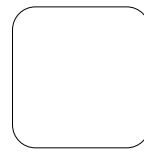
Go to
the
scene



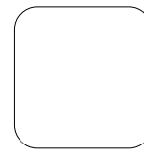
Gather
information



Determine
cause,
manner, and
time of
death



Complete
the death
certificate
within 10
days using
the online
system

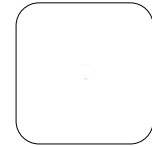


Special
procedure
for certain
inquests

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How Are You Notified?

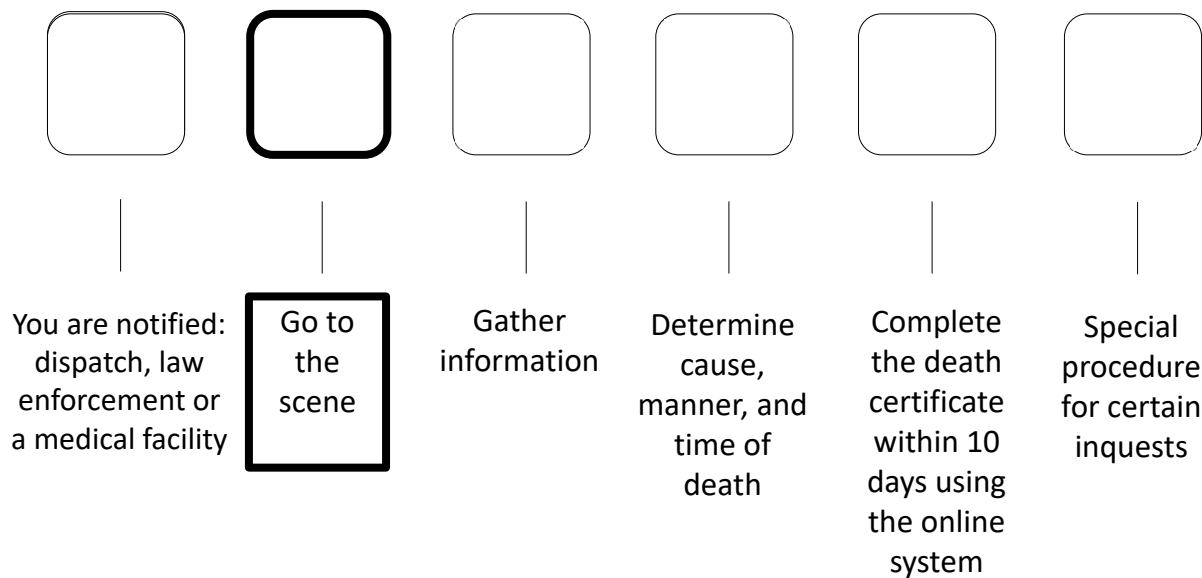
Code of Criminal Procedure



How Death Occurred	Notification	Law
Attended by a physician who is unable to certify	Doctor, the hospital, superintendent or general manager of the hospital	<i>Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.04(7)(b) & (c), 49.07.</i>
Penal institution	Sheriff or other person in charge of the penal institution	<i>Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.18.</i>
Death requiring an inquest	Peace officer	<i>Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.07.</i>

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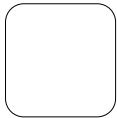
Process of an Inquest



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Go to the Scene: Timing of an Inquest

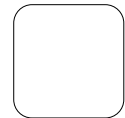
- Conduct the death inquest immediately or as soon as practical
- What does “as soon as practical” really mean?
- **But what if it’s in the middle of the night?**



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Code of Criminal Procedure

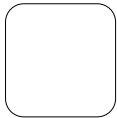
Art. 49.05 Place of Inquest



- (b) A justice of the peace may conduct an inquest:
- (1) at the place where the death occurred;
 - (2) where the body was found;
 - (3) By videoconference; or
 - (4) at any other place determined to be reasonable by the justice.

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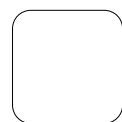
What about FaceTime or Zoom?



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Tex. CCP Art. 27.18 (a) (2)

A videoconference provides for a simultaneous, compress full motion video, and interactive communication of image and sound between the Judge, the Attorney representing the state, the defendant, and defendant's attorney.

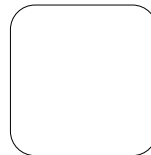


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Independent Investigation

JP has **equal** and **independent** investigation rights to law enforcement, but you can't interfere with their investigation.

Art. 49.03

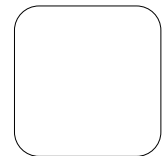


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Controlling Scene

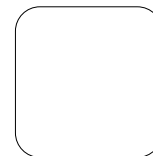
When you are on-site gathering information, you may need to control the scene by:

- Sealing the premises
- Moving the body
- Dealing with people who attempt to hinder your investigation



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Sealing Premises of Deceased



- You can lock and seal a location if the deceased had “sole control” of the location (*it is their house and no one else lived there*)
- Only a peace officer conducting an investigation into the death could enter
- It is a Class B misdemeanor to tamper with or remove this lock or seal

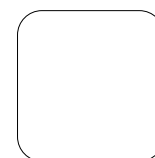
Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.22.

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Parent Viewing a Body At a Death Scene

- A deceased’s parent is entitled to view their body – *even when the deceased is an adult*
- A justice of the peace **must** allow the parent to see their child, but may request that it be done away from the scene or in another appropriate manner

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.52(a)&(b)

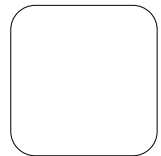


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Supervised by the JP

- A parent may not have contact with their child's body unless the parent first obtains the consent of the justice of the peace; and
- A person may not remove a medical device from the body or otherwise alter the condition of the body for purposes of conducting the viewing unless the person first obtains the consent of the justice of the peace

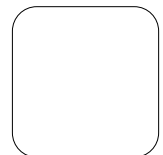
Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.52(c)



39

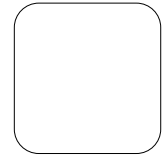
Moving the body

Law Enforcement and Justice of the Peace Must
Work Together



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Moving the Body



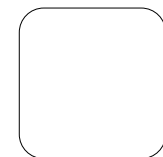
- **Must** wait until law enforcement has finished their investigation before moving a body from a death scene.
“reasonable time” exception if waiting for them to start investigation
- The body cannot be moved or the surrounding scene touched (unless by law enforcement due to an emergency) until you give authorization
- Class C misdemeanor to tamper with the body or scene

Code of Criminal Procedure Arts. 49.05 (c) (e) & (f)

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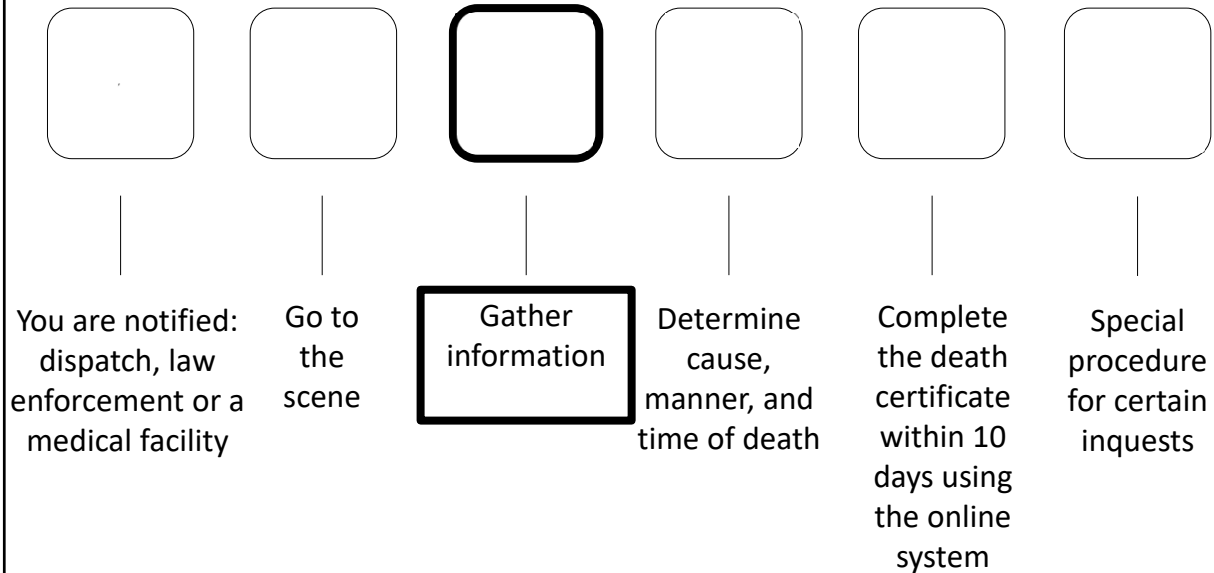
Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.06

- (a) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly hinders the entrance of a justice of the peace to a premises where a death occurred or a body is found.
- (b) An offense under this article is a Class B misdemeanor.



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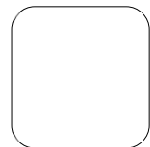
Process of an Inquest



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What Tools Do I Have To Gather Information?

- Talking to witnesses, friends, or family members on the scene or on the phone
- Reviewing records – medical or other
- Autopsies
- Other tests
- Medications
- Criminal and mental history



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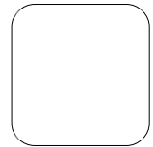
HIPPA

(Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, 164.512

(g) Standard: Uses and disclosures about decedents –
(1) *Coroners and medical examiners.*

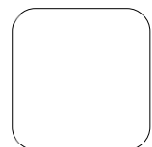
A covered entity may disclose protected health information to a coroner or medical examiner for the purpose of identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death, or other duties as authorized by law.



45

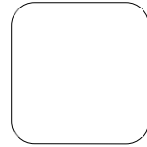
Interviewing Family Members and Others

- Last time to speak or see the decedent alive
- Demeanor
- Gripes/Complaints
- Unbecoming behavior
- Medical history
- What type of patient was the decedent
- PCP information
- Social/lifestyle behavior



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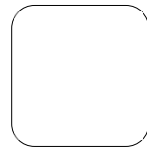
Examination of the Body



- Trauma
 - Abrasions
 - Contusions
 - Petechial hemorrhage of the eyes
- Position
- Guns/knives/ropes
- Blood – splatter/direction
- Insects activity
- Color/Lividity
- Notes
- Extracurriculars
- Height to weight ratio

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More Resources



Great inquest resources on the TJCTC website...let's take a look!

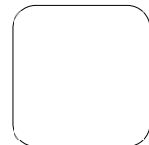
48

“Evidence” Found At The Scene

- Must preserve all tangible evidence that you find while performing the inquest that “tends to show the real cause of death or identify the person who caused the death”

- Shall:
 - give it to the appropriate law enforcement agency to be stored in the agency's property room

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.17 (1)&(2)

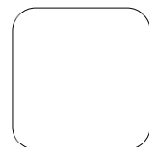


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Doctor’s Opinion

- May get the opinion of a county health officer or a physician to help you decide if you need an autopsy.
- The commissioners court must pay a reasonable fee for that consultation

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10 (a)&(b)



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Autopsy Definition

"Autopsy" means a post death examination of a person's body.

May include:

- X-rays
- Examination of internal organs after dissection
- Toxicology testing

Autopsies are done to help determine the cause and manner of death.
The bill is not your problem (TX CCP 49.10 (g); (h))

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.01. (1)

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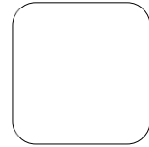
Other Tests: Full Autopsy Not Needed

- May order a physician to take or remove a sample of body fluids, tissues, or organs in order to determine the nature and cause of death.
- May not order any person other than a physician to take samples from the body of a deceased person. (exception – DWI crash)

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10 (i)

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Deaths Fall Into 3 Autopsy Categories



Discretionary
***You Can Choose**



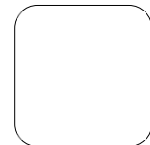
Mandatory
You *must*
Order an Autopsy



Prohibited
You *Cannot* Order
an Autopsy

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Remember: The bill is not your problem!



Tex. CCP 49.10 (g); (h)

The commissioners court shall pay a reasonable fee to a physician performing an autopsy on the order of a justice of the peace, if a fee is assessed.

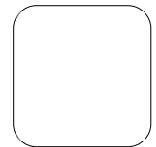
“...Shall pay a reasonable fee for the transportation of a body to a place where an autopsy can be performed...”

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Discretion – Your Choice to Get An Autopsy

- Any
- All
- None
- Private

Code of Criminal Procedure Arts. 49.10 (c)(1)&(2), 49.10 (e)(1)



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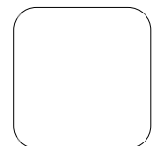
Discretion – Your Choice to Get An Autopsy

A person is injured in on county
And dies as a result of those injuries
in another county;

The prosecuting attorney in the county where the injury occurred
may request the J.P. in the county where the death occurred to
order an autopsy.

The county in which the injury occurred must reimburse the
county where the death occurred.

Code of Criminal Procedure Arts. 49.10 (o)

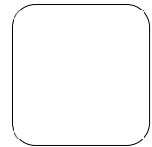


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Must Request an Autopsy

- If the prosecutor directs you to order one
- For any death of a child younger than six if the death is unexpected or abuse or neglect is suspected.
(Not a motor vehicle accident)

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10(e)
Family Code 264.513; and 264.514

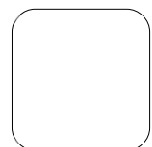


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Cannot Request an Autopsy

- If the person dies from a communicable disease during a health disaster (Ebola, COVID-19)
- Or if the person died from Asiatic cholera, bubonic plague, typhus fever, or smallpox

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10(d)

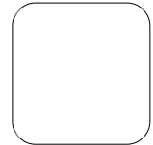


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Other Testing – Exception for Blood Draw

- If you suspect a DWI motor vehicle accident **or you believe it will aid in the confirmation or determination of cause and manner of death**, then the following can take a blood sample **from the deceased**:
 - a qualified technician,
 - paramedic,
 - chemist,
 - registered professional nurse, or
 - licensed vocational nurse

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10 (j)

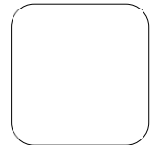


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Chemical Analysis

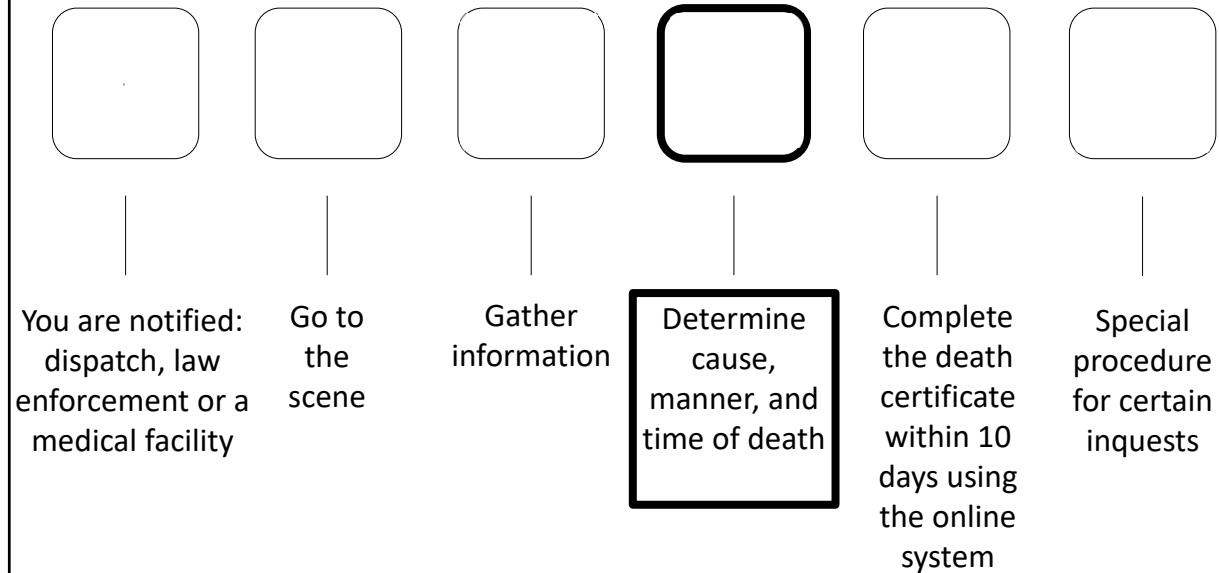
- May order a chemical analysis from a chemist, toxicologist, pathologist, or other medical expert to determine if death was caused by the poison or other chemical substance
- Must order if requested by the physician who performed an autopsy
 - Commissioners court shall pay a reasonable fee for the analysis

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.11 (a)-(c)



60

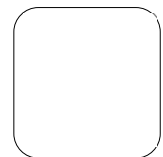
Process of an Inquest



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How Do You Determine Cause and Manner of Death

- You use the information you gathered on the scene, off the scene, and through autopsies and tests to decide the category of the death (manner) and why the person died (cause).
- Let's break it down further on the next few slides.



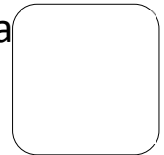
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Cause and Manner of Death

Cause of death = Opinion of the certifier

“The cause-of-death section is designed to elicit the *opinion* of the medical certifier. Causes of death on the death certificate represent a medical *opinion* that might vary among individual physicians.”

- CDC Physicians' Handbook on Medical Certification of Death
2003 Revision.

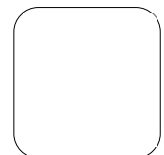


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What are some examples of what cause and manner look like together?

-
- Cause: gunshot to the head → Manner: suicide
 - Cause: drowning → Manner: accidental
 - Cause: stab wound to the chest → Manner: homicide
 - Cause: pancreatic cancer → Manner: natural

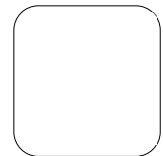
Remember, someone's heart stopping is not what **caused death, everyone's heart stops when they die!



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Cause of Death

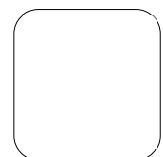
- Most of the time, the cause of death is a chain of events, not one single thing.
- Use underlying causes in a chain to tell the story of what happened.
- For example, there are many reasons a person could have a heart attack.



65

Heart Attack Examples

- A person could have a heart attack after using drugs.
 - a. Acute Cocaine Cardiotoxicity
- A person with high blood pressure and cholesterol could die from a heart attack.
 - a. Hypertensive and Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease
 - b. Hypertension
 - c. Hyperlipidemia
- A person with heart disease could ultimately die after a heart attack.
 - a. Coronary artery thrombosis
 - b. Coronary Heart disease
 - c. Atrial fibrillation



66

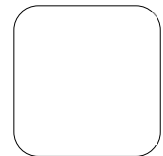
Myocardial Infarction Types

Type 2 Myocardial Infarction – Secondary to ischemia due to either increased oxygen demand or decreased. Can be caused by atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the arteries.)

Type 3 Myocardial Infarction – Sudden unexpected cardiac death often with symptoms suggestive of myocardial ischemia (reduced blood flow to the heart). Can be caused by trauma or

Symptoms: Chest pain, breathing difficulty, numbness, weakness in the arms and legs, excessive sweating, rapid heart beat, nausea, radiating pain throughout the arms, chest and back, and fatigue.

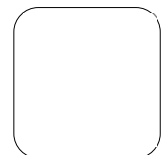
Women: Jaw pain and pain in the mid-back area
Men: Shooting pain in the arms and pain in the chest.



67

Underlying Causes vs. Other Significant Conditions

- Underlying causes are what starts the chain of events that cause the death.
- Significant conditions are other medical issues that may be present but didn't necessarily directly cause the death.
- Why are significant conditions even important??
 - Statistics
 - Full story
 - Further research



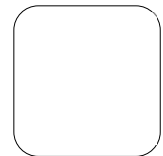
68

Time of Death

Time of death can be as or even more important than cause and manner of death.

There are four options for Time of Death

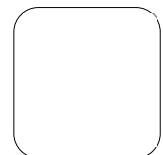
- Actual
- Presumed
- Estimated
- Found



69

Time of Death - Actual

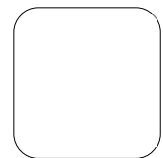
- Actual would be used when the definitive time of death is known based on the information at hand. (video, witnessed, etc.)
- If you can determine the exact time of death use Actual.
- Actual time of death is not the time they were pronounced dead.



70

Time of Death - Presumed

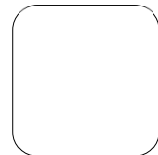
- Presumed would be used when the actual time is unknown due to missing information.
- If you are missing information that would allow you to determine the actual time of death, but the information you do have allows you to get close to the time, use Presumed.
- If you can get within an hour or two of death.



71

Time of Death - Estimated

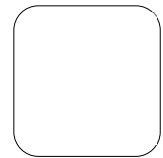
- Estimated would be used when the definitive time of death is not known but can be approximated based on documentation and investigation.
- If you are utilizing information that does not allow you to get a presumed time, through information from the scene or the body, use Estimated.
- If you can estimate within a several hour window.



72

Time of Death - Found

- Found would be used for the remains were found.
- This would be used when a body has been found after an extended period of time and the time of death cannot be presumed or estimated.
- Use this a last option for time of death.

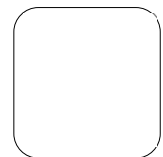


73

Determining Time of Death

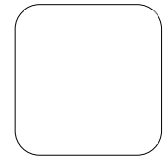
What can you use to determine time of death?

- Witnesses, doctors, EMS
- Food or drinks
- Cell phones, video, computers, mail, news paper, and lawn condition
- 911 call
- The body (the Rigor family)



74

Body Condition



Pallor Mortis - Paling of the body post-mortem.

Rigor Mortis - Stiffing of the body post-mortem.

Livor Mortis - Pooling of blood in the body post-mortem.

Algor Mortis - Cooling of the body post-mortem.

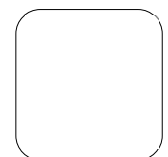
Putrefaction - Decomposition of the body.

Blood from wounds - A person stops bleeding once they are deceased.

75

Pallor Mortis

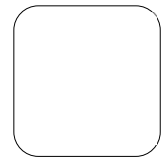
- Pallor Mortis is the first stage after death, and usually begins within minutes of death.
- It is the paleness that occurs due to the lack of blood flow through the body and to the capillaries.
- More noticeable in lighter skin tones.



76

Rigor Mortis

- Rigor Mortis is cadaveric rigidity, caused by a chemical change in the myofibrils of the body muscles.
- Onset in different parts of the body help determine how long the body has been deceased.
- Jaw > Neck > Trunk > Upper Extremities > Lower Extremities > Fingers and Toes
- Passes the way it came.



77

Onset of Rigor Mortis

Area – Time Post-Mortem

Jaw – 1-2 hours

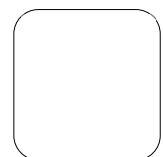
Neck – 1-3 hours

Torso – 2-4 hours

Upper Extremities – 2-5 hours

Lower Extremities – 3-8 hours

Complete Rigor Mortis – 6-12 hours



78

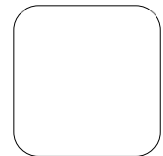
Rigor Mortis (muscle stiffening)

Warm & absent = > 3 hours

Warm & present = 3-8 hours

Cold & absent = < 36 hours

Cold & present = 8-36 hours

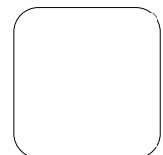


79

Onset of Rigor Mortis

Onset can vary in time for several reasons:

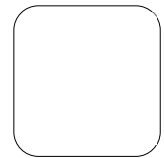
- **Ambient temperature.**
Slower in cold, faster in heat.
- **Mode of death.**
Poisonings can delay rigor mortis. Excessive muscle use can expedite rigor mortis (i.e. post work out cardiac event).
- **Age of decedent.**
Infants and Elderly will usually have a more rapid onset and thus pass more rapidly.



80

Rule of 12 in Rigor Mortis

- Generally, rigor mortis takes 12 hours to fully develop, then remains for 12 hours, then takes 12 hours to pass.
- So, if a body feels cold to the touch and is completely flaccid the person has likely been deceased for around 36 hours.

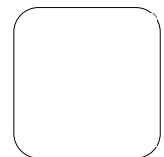


81

Rigor Mortis

Notice the hand and fingers are rigid and pointing up against gravity.

The body has been rolled from a prone position to a supine position.



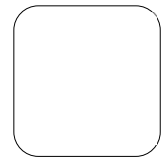
82

Livor Mortis

Also called Lividity or
Postmortem Hypostasis

Livor mortis is the pooling of
the blood in the body due to
gravity and the lack of blood
circulation.

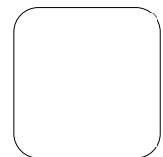
Livor mortis begins around 30
minutes to an hour after
death.



83

Livor Mortis

- Blanching
 - 6 – 12 hours after death
- Non-Blanching or Fixed
 - > 12 hours

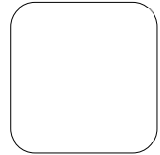


84

Livor Mortis

Notice the color of the left foot from the pooling blood and the white portions of the knees where blood could not pool due to contact.

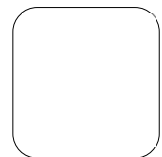
The body has been rolled from a prone position to a supine position.



85

Algor Mortis

- Cooling of the body post-mortem.
- Algor mortis is greatly affected by the ambient temperature and the location of the body.
- Algor mortis causes the body to reach the ambient temperature around 12 to 18 hours after death. A rule of thumb often accepted is 1.5° F every hour.

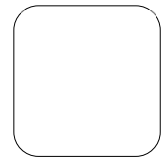


86

Determining Time of Death

Putrefaction

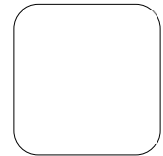
- = > 48 hours
- Bloating and discoloration (10-20 days)
- Blisters
- Skin slippage
- Loss of hair and nails
- Mummification



87

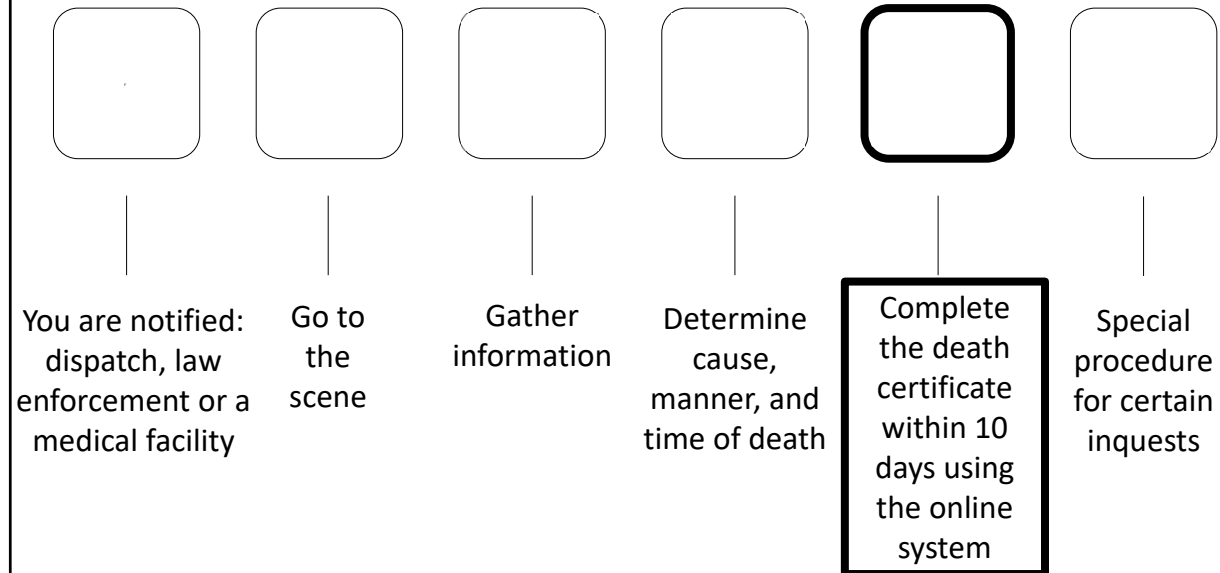
Formal Inquest Hearing

-
- Tex. CCP Art. 49.14 – May/Shall
 - Very uncommon
 - TJCTC Inquest Deskbook pages 21-23
 - Same as civil case
 - Transcription
 - Contempt powers
 - May include a jury



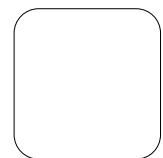
88

Process of an Inquest



89

How to Complete Death Certificates

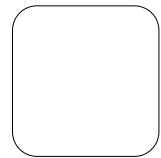


90

Orders and Death Certificates

- Shall sign the death certificate and all orders made as a necessary part of the inquest.

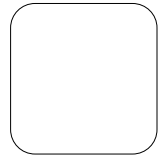
Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.16



91

What Kind of Information do you Need to Complete the Death Certificate?

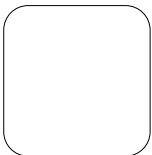
- **Department of State Health Services (DSHS) determines the content**
 - Personal information of deceased
 - Your case number
 - Date and time of death
 - Cause and manner
 - Information if death was accidental (location of accident, etc.)
 - Pregnancy status for females
 - Whether smoking had a part in the death
 - Injury related death



92

Online Death Certificate System: TxEVER

Operated by the Office of
Vital Statistics under the
Department of State
Health Services



<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/txever/>

93

Why do we use this type of death certificate reporting

- Texas death certificate are very similar to others around the world.
- In the 1940s there were international standards set to help share information.
- The CDC updates and reviews the US version every 10-15 years

Remember...

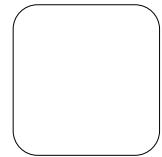
Laws change from country to country, but a body is still a body no matter the country it is located in.

These standards can help make the information useable across the world.

94

Why is this so important??

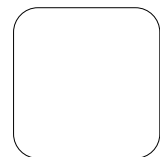
- Community health concerns
- Pensions and life insurance calculations
- Track health spending
- Track infant and maternal mortality rates
- Settling estates
- Preventing fraud
- Health research
- *Did we miss anything??*



95

TxEVER Information

- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/vs/partners/txever-guides/>

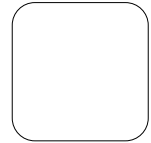


96

When and How to Complete?

- Death Certificate must be completed by the **10th day** after the inquest
- File with the local registrar of the registration district in which:
 - The death occurs; or
 - The body is found, if the place of death is not known.
- The required personal information should come from a “competent person with knowledge of the facts”
- Strong trend to include underlying information, such as drugs in the body

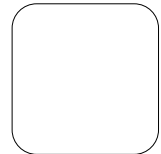
HSC Sec. 193.003 (A) & HSC Sec. 193.004 (A)



97

How to Complete in 10 Days if Waiting on Tests or Autopsy?

- File as “**Pending Investigation**” in the Cause of Death Field
- Once the results of the autopsy have been determined, you can electronically amend the death certificate



98

Let's look at some examples!

99

CAUSE OF DEATH (See instructions and examples)		Approximate interval: Onset to death
<p>32. PART I. Enter the <u>chain of events</u>—diseases, injuries, or complications—that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.</p> <p>IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) -----> a. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the UNDERLYING CAUSE (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) LAST</p> <p>b. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>c. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>d. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>PART II. Enter other significant conditions contributing</p>		
<p>35. DID TOBACCO USE CONTRIBUTE TO DEATH?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Probably</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>		<p>32. PART I. Enter the <u>chain of events</u>—diseases, injuries, or complications—that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.</p> <p>IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) -----> a. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the UNDERLYING CAUSE (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) LAST</p> <p>b. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>c. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p>d. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not pregnant within past year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant at time of death</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not pregnant, but pregnant within 42 days of death</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not pregnant, but pregnant 43 days to 1 year before death</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown if pregnant within the past year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/> Homicide</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accident <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Investigation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Suicide <input type="checkbox"/> Could not be determined</p>

100

Certifying the Certificate of Death

Part I - Cause of death

sequence of conditions or events leading directly to death

- Line (a)
 - ❖ Immediate cause of death
- Line (b), (c), and (d)
 - ❖ What gave rise to the immediate cause of death
 - ❖ Each condition should have caused the condition on the line above it
- If more room is needed

*You are not required to fill every line!!!
Must only use line (a)*

Part II – Other significant conditions contributing to death

- ❖ Present conditions not leading to the underlying cause of death
- ❖ Use punctuation

101

The screenshot shows an email client interface. On the left is a sidebar with folders: INBOX, Autopsy and Inquest (with sub-folders for 1st and 2nd terms for years 2020, 2021, 2022, and City of Sulphur Springs), and Death Certification (with sub-folders for 1st and 2nd terms for years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and Defendant GPS). The main area shows a list of emails from 'No_Reply@dshs.texas.gov' with subject lines like 'You Have Been Assigned a Death Record to Complete'. The selected email is open, showing the following content:

You Have Been Assigned a Death Record to Complete
 From: No_Reply@dshs.texas.gov (September 12, 2022 10:00 AM)
 To: BCUMMINGS@hopkinscountytx.org
 CC: TCALHOUN@hopkinscountytx.org

Electronic Death Record #000044445435263 has been designated to you for Medical Data Entry.

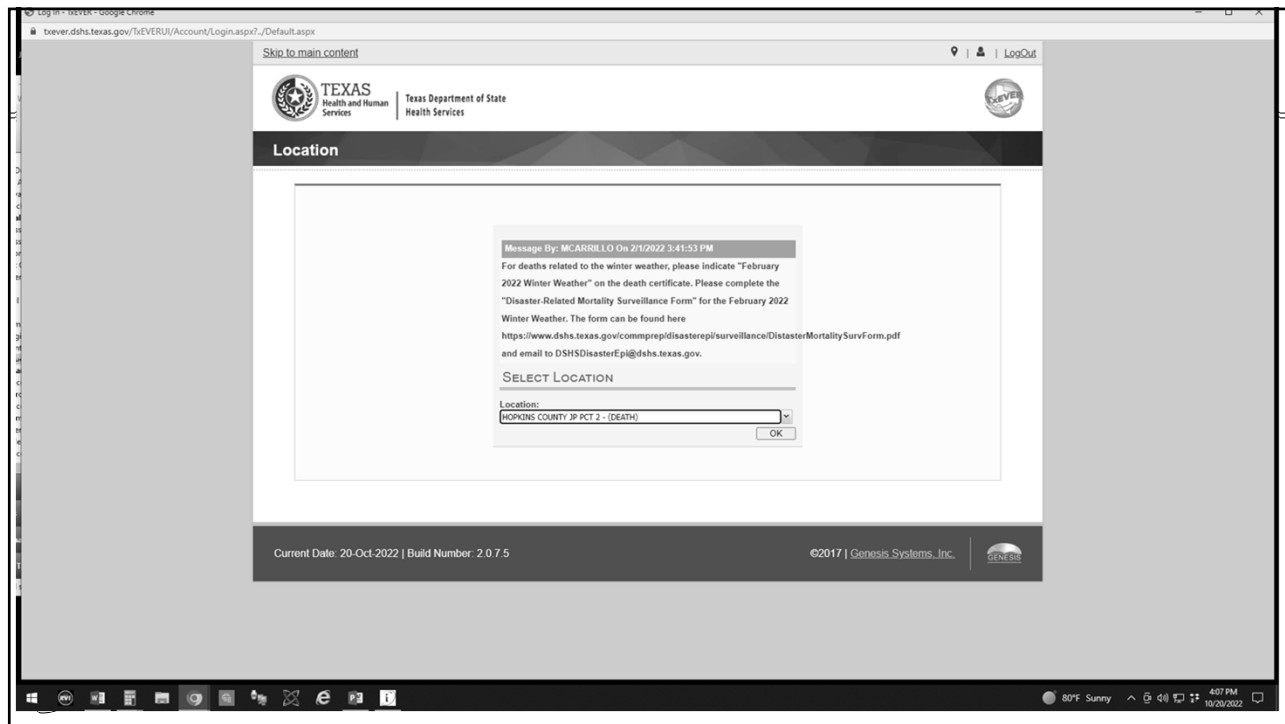
Decedent Name: Paul Bearer
 Date of Death: 09/11/2022
 Funeral Home: MURRAY-ORWOSKY FUNERAL HOME
 Certifier: HOPKINS COUNTY JP PCT 2

Please visit <https://txever.dshs.texas.gov/TxEverUI/Welcome.htm> to view/update the details.

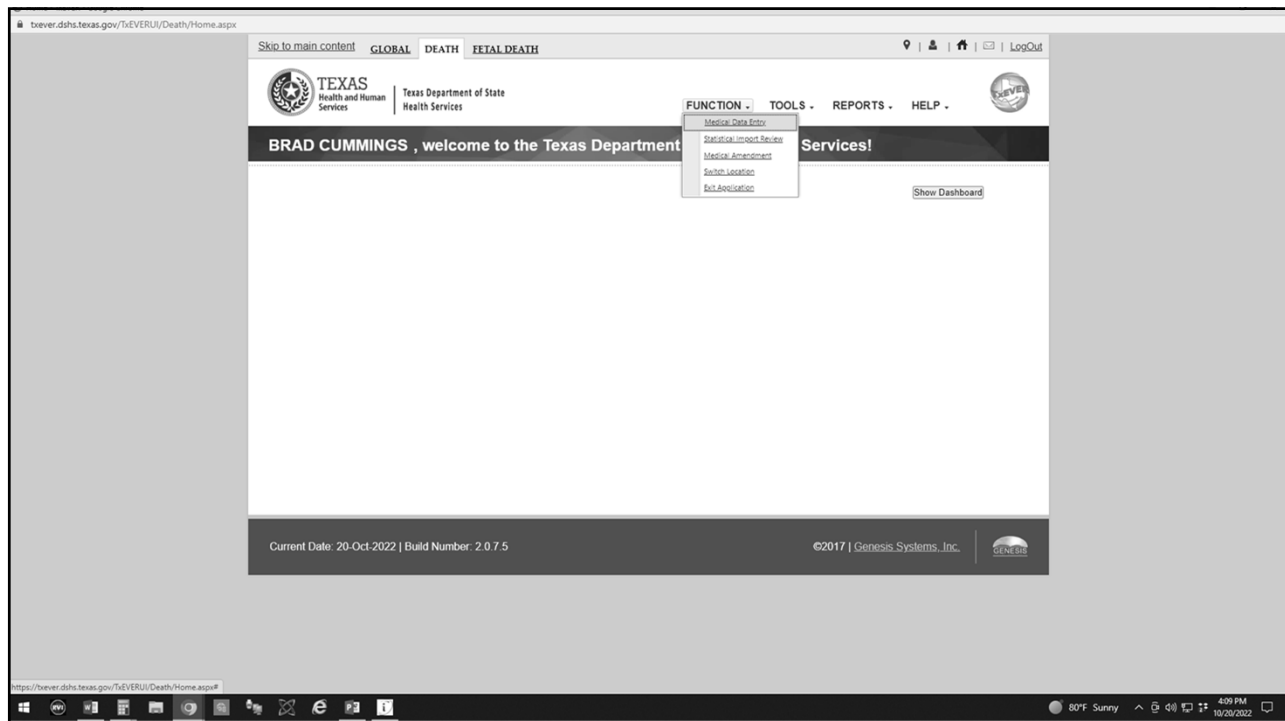
If it has been more than 90 days since your last login to TxEVER - please contact your facility's local administrator to unlock your account.

This is an automatically generated E-mail. Please do not 'Respond' to this E-mail as a response by E-mail will not be processed.

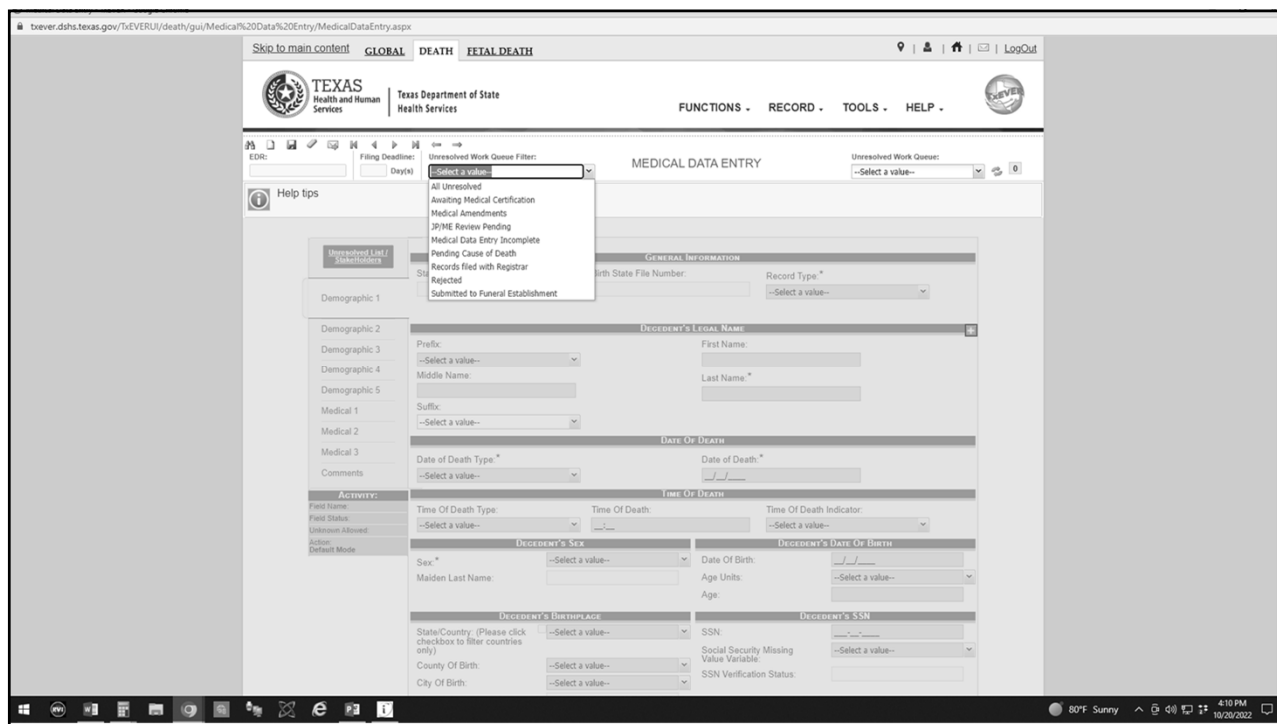
102



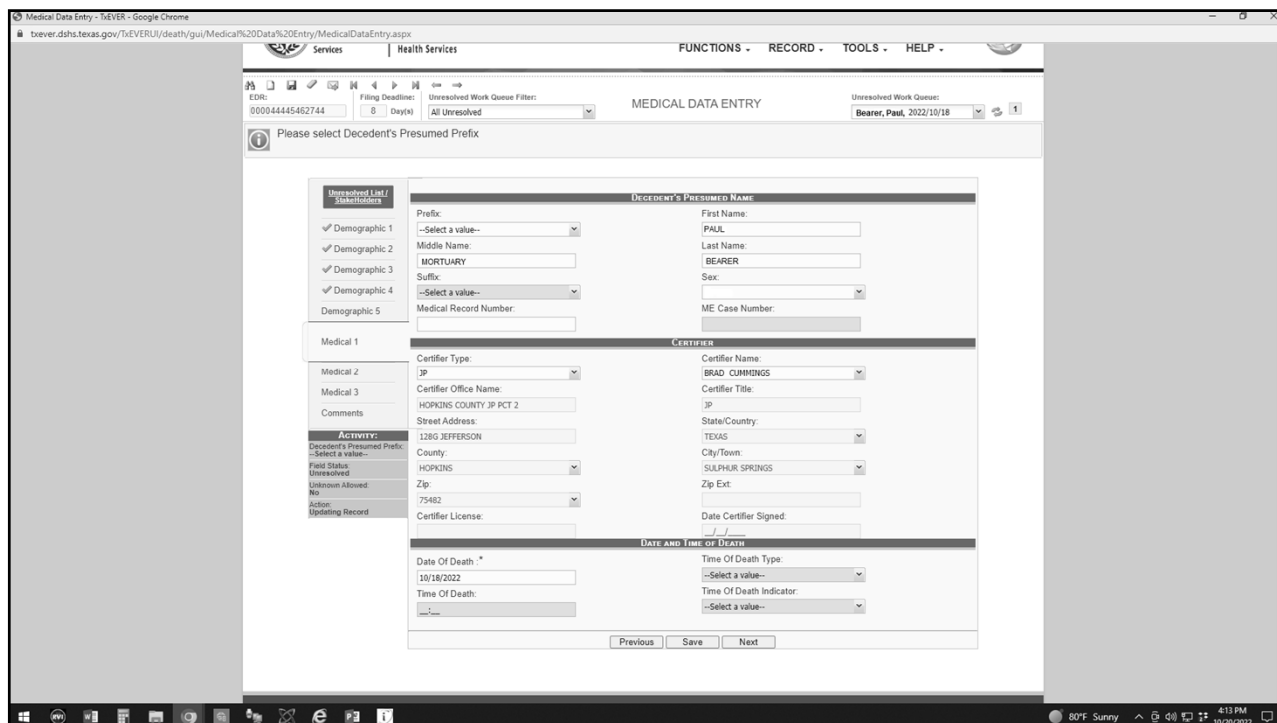
103



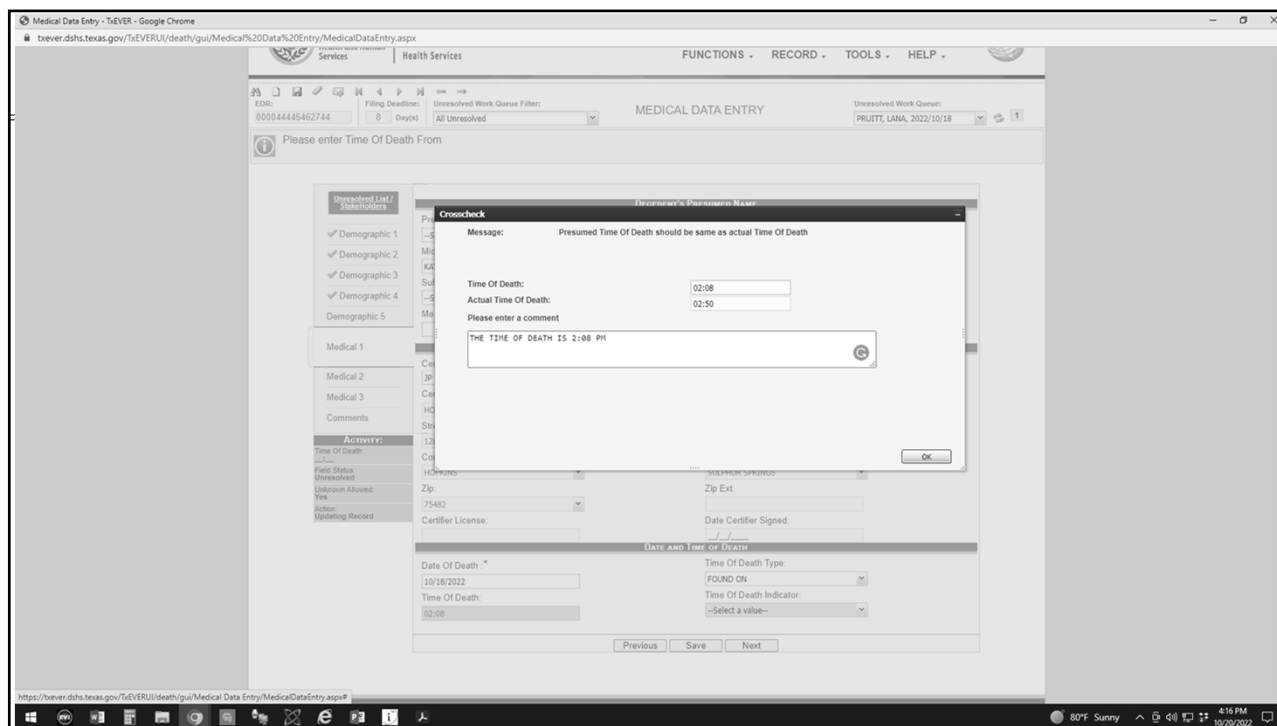
104



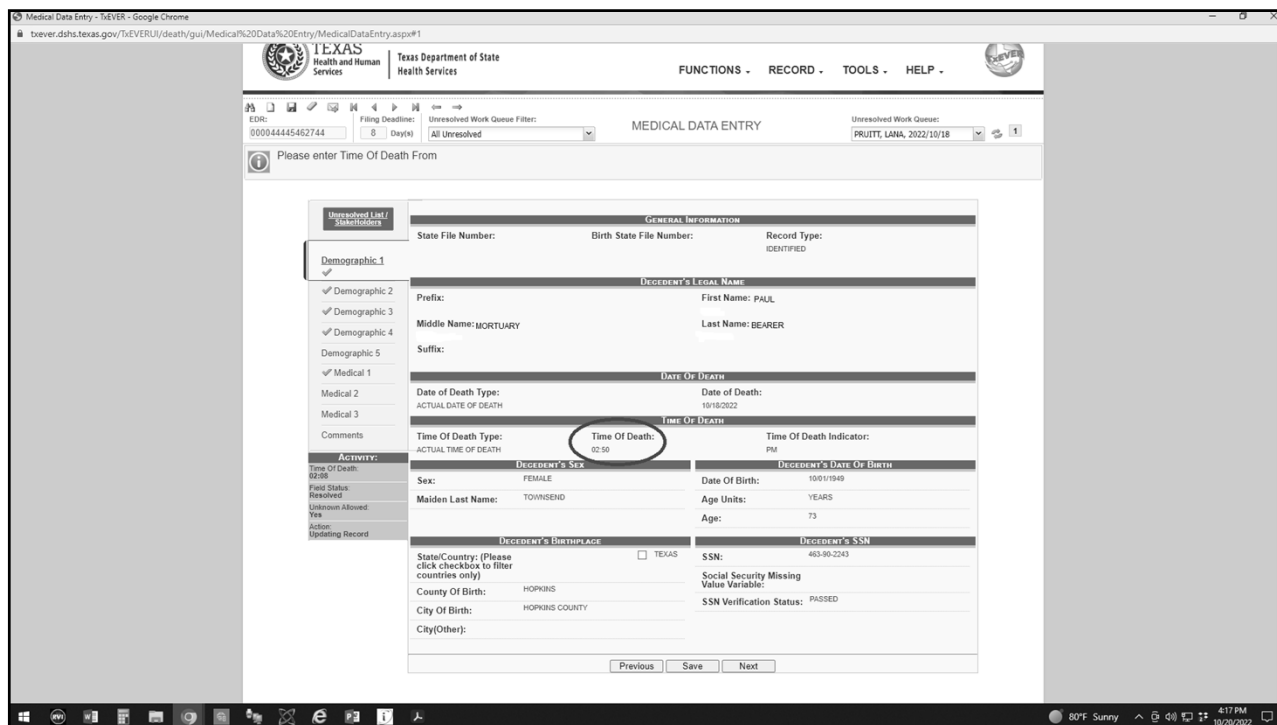
105



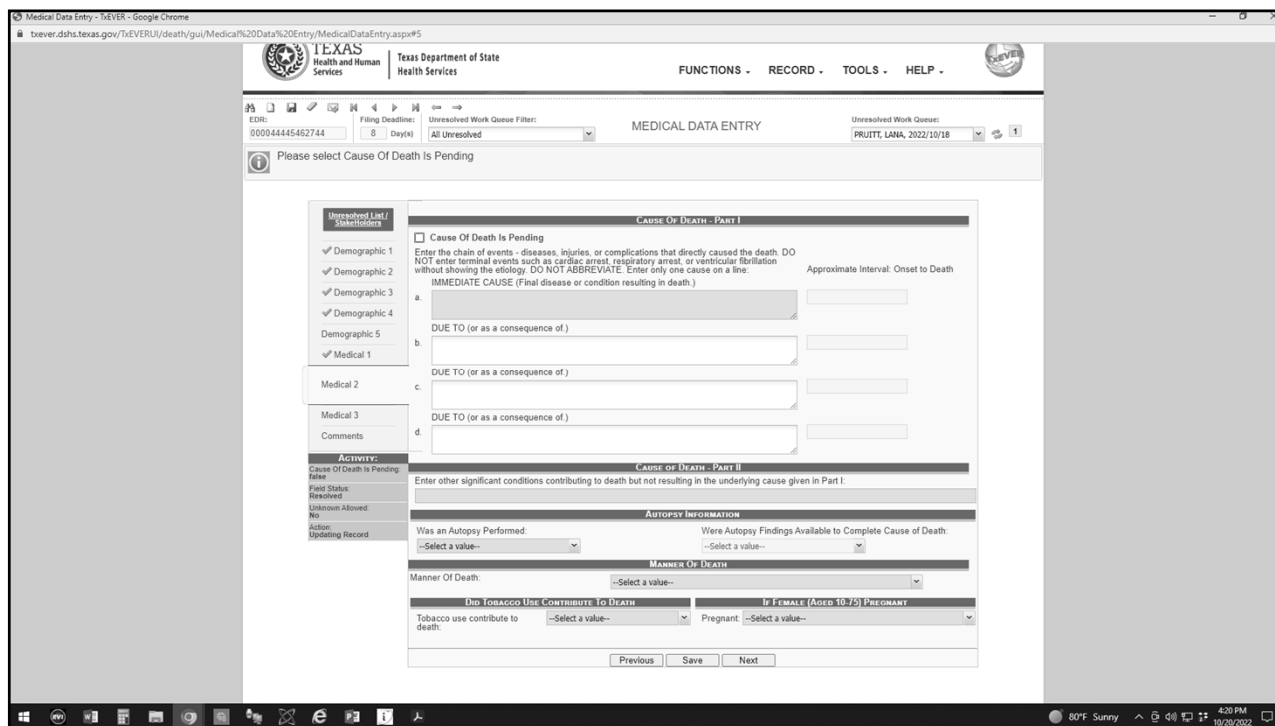
106



107



108



109

Tell The Story : Example

32. **PART I.** Enter the chain of events—diseases, injuries, or complications—that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) ----->

a. _____ **Has heart failure**
Due to (or as a consequence of): _____

Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the **UNDERLYING CAUSE** (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) **LAST**

b. _____ **It spread (metastases)**
Due to (or as a consequence of): _____
c. _____ **Descendent had breast cancer**
Due to (or as a consequence of): _____
d. _____

110

Is This Properly Completed?

32. **PART I.** Enter the chain of events--diseases, injuries, or complications--that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.

Cardiopulmonary Arrest (Heart Stops)

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition -----> resulting in death) a. _____
Due to (or as a consequence of): **Hypertension (high blood pressure)**

Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the **UNDERLYING CAUSE** (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) **LAST**

b. _____
Due to (or as a consequence of):

c. _____
Due to (or as a consequence of):

d. _____

111

No!

The screenshot shows the T-MED web interface. A validation error message is displayed in a pop-up window:

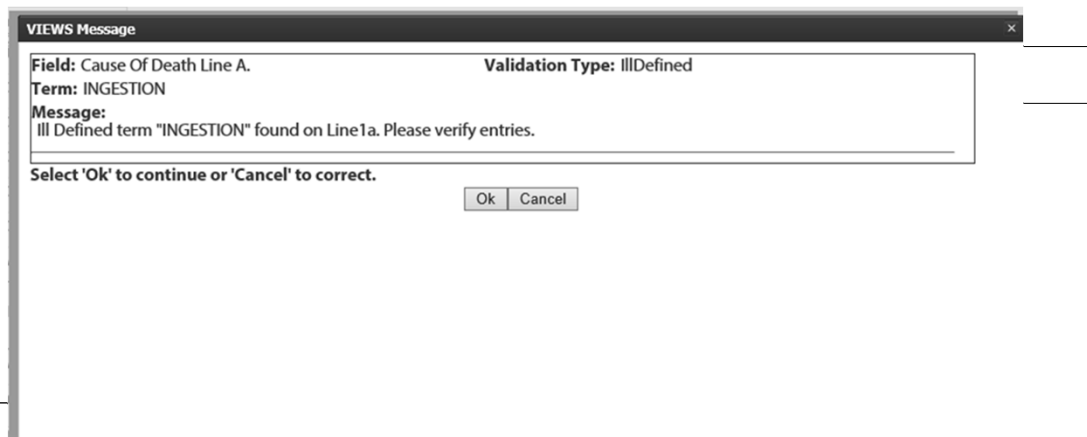
VIEW Message
Field: Cause Of Death Line A Validation Type: IllDefined
Term: CARDIAC ARREST
Message:
Ill Defined term "CARDIAC ARREST" found on Line 1a. Please be more specific.
Select "Ok" to continue or "Cancel" to correct. [Ok] [Cancel]

The background shows the "MEDICAL DATA ENTRY" form with various sections like "DEATH - PART I", "CAUSE OF DEATH - PART I", "AUTOPSY INFORMATION", and "MANNER OF DEATH". The error message points to the "Cause of Death Line A" field.

112

“VIEWS” System

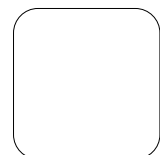
Validations and Interactive Edits Web Service



113

VIEWS System

- Online service from the National Center for Health Statistics and Centers for Disease Control
- Suggests better quality data
- Helps with spelling errors and suggests more descriptive terminology



114

Medical Data Entry - TXEVER - Google Chrome
txever.dshs.texas.gov/TXEVERUI/death/gui/Medical%20Data%20Entry/MedicalDataEntry.aspx#5

TEXAS Health and Human Services Texas Department of State Health Services

FUNCTIONS RECORD TOOLS HELP

EDR: 000044445462744 Filing Deadline: 8 (day(s)) Unresolved Work Queue Filter: All Unresolved MEDICAL DATA ENTRY Unresolved Work Queue: Bearer, Paul 2022/10/18

Please select Female - Pregnant

CAUSE OF DEATH - PART I
 Cause of Death Is Pending
 Enter the chain of events - diseases, injuries, or complications that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line.
 IMMEDIATE CAUSE (final disease or condition resulting in death) Approximate Interval: Onset to Death

a. CARDIAC ARREST DUE TO HYPERTENSIVE ARTERIOSCLEROTIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE MINUTES
 DUE TO (or as a consequence of.)
 b. HYPERTENSION YEARS
 DUE TO (or as a consequence of.)
 c. CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE YEARS
 DUE TO (or as a consequence of.)
 d. YEARS

CAUSE OF DEATH - PART II
 Enter other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I.
 COMPLICATIONS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

AUTOPSY INFORMATION
 Was an Autopsy Performed: NO Were Autopsy Findings Available to Complete Cause of Death: --Select a value--

MANNER OF DEATH
 Manner of Death: NATURAL

TOBACCO USE CONTRIBUTES TO DEATH
 Tobacco use contribute to death: UNKNOWN Pregnant: NOT PREGNANT WITHIN THE PAST YEAR

Previous Save Next

115

Try To Be As Specific As Possible

Vague cause of death: Cancer

Specific cause of death: Adenocarcinoma of the upper right lung with metastases to the brain

Contributing factor: Fail to thrive

Vague cause of death: Seizure

Specific cause of death: Delirium Tremens (seizure due to alcohol withdrawal)

Contributing factor: Alcoholism

116

Approximate Interval: Onset to Death

Medical Data Entry - TEVER - Google Chrome
txever.dshs.texas.gov/TeVERUI/death/gui/Medical%20Data%20Entry/MedicalDataEntry.aspx#5

TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services

FUNCTIONS RECORD TOOLS HELP

EDR: 00004445462744 Filing Deadline: 8 Days Unresolved Work Queue Filter: All Unresolved MEDICAL DATA ENTRY Unresolved Work Queue: 1

Please select Cause Of Death Is Pending

Unresolved List/ Subscribers

- Demographic 1
- Demographic 2
- Demographic 3
- Demographic 4
- Demographic 5
- Medical 1
- Medical 2
- Medical 3
- Comments

ACTIVITY:

Cause Of Death Is Pending: True
Field Status: Resolved
Unknown Allowed: No
Action: Pending Record

CAUSE OF DEATH - PART I

Cause Of Death Is Pending

Enter the chain of events - diseases, injuries, or complications that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death.)

a. Approximate Interval: Onset to Death

b. DUE TO (or as a consequence of.)

c. DUE TO (or as a consequence of.)

d. DUE TO (or as a consequence of.)

CAUSE OF DEATH - PART II

Enter other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I.

AUTOPSY INFORMATION

Were Autopsy Findings Available to Complete Cause of Death:
--Select a value--

MANNER OF DEATH

Manner Of Death: --Select a value--

Tobacco Use CONTRIBUTE TO DEATH

Tobacco use contribute to death: --Select a value--

PREGNANT

Pregnant: --Select a value--

Previous Save Next

80°F Sunny 4:20 PM 10/26/2022

- Years
- Months
- Days
- Weeks
- Hours
- Minutes
- Seconds
- Immediately
- Approximately
- Unknown

117

Injury

Medical Data Entry - TEVER - Google Chrome
txever.dshs.texas.gov/TeVERUI/death/gui/Medical%20Data%20Entry/MedicalDataEntry.aspx#6

TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services

FUNCTIONS RECORD TOOLS HELP

EDR: 00004445462744 Filing Deadline: 8 Days Unresolved Work Queue Filter: All Unresolved MEDICAL DATA ENTRY Unresolved Work Queue: PRUITT, LANA, 2022/10/18

Please select Female - Pregnant

Unresolved List/ Subscribers

- Demographic 1
- Demographic 2
- Demographic 3
- Demographic 4
- Demographic 5
- Medical 1
- Medical 2
- Medical 3
- Comments

ACTIVITY:

Female - Pregnant: --Select a value--
Field Status: Unresolved
Unknown Allowed: Yes
Action: Pending Record

ANY INJURY INFORMATION TO REPORT

Any Injury Information To Report: --Select a value--

TRANSPORTATION INJURY INFORMATION

Was Injury related to a transportation accident: --Select a value--
(Specify)

Decedent's Role in Transportation Injury: --Select a value--

DATE AND TIME OF INJURY

Date of Injury Type: --Select a value-- Date of Injury:

Time of Injury Type: --Select a value-- Injury Time:

AM/PM: --Select a value--

PLACE OF INJURY

Injury at Work: --Select a value-- Place of Injury:

Street Address:

Apt:

State/Country: (Please click checkbox to filter countries only) --Select a value-- County: --Select a value--

City/Town:

City/Other:

Zip:

Zip Ext:

DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED, IF TRANSPORTATION INJURY. STATE THE TYPE(S) OF VEHICLES INVOLVED

Describe how injury occurred:

Previous Save Next

80°F Sunny 4:36 PM 10/26/2022

118

Certification

The screenshot shows the 'MEDICAL DATA ENTRY' interface. A dropdown menu is open, listing various actions such as 'Save', 'Print', 'Case', 'Decline', and 'Process Medical Amendment'. The form fields are as follows:

GENERAL INFORMATION		
State File Number:	Birth State File Number:	
DECEDENT'S LEGAL NAME		
Prefix:	First Name: Paul	
Middle Name: Mortuary	Last Name: Bearer	
Suffix:		
DATE OF DEATH		
Date of Death Type:	Date of Death:	Time Of Death Indicator:
ACTUAL DATE OF DEATH	10/16/2022	PM
TIME OF DEATH		
Time Of Death Type:	Time Of Death:	Time Of Death Indicator:
ACTUAL TIME OF DEATH	02:30	PM
DECEDENT'S SEX		
Sex:	MALE	
Maiden Last Name:		
DECEDENT'S DATE OF BIRTH		
Date of Birth:	10/01/1949	
Age Units:	YEARS	
Age:	73	
DECEDENT'S BIRTHPLACE		
State/Country: (Please click checkbox to filter countries only)	<input type="checkbox"/> TEXAS	
County Of Birth:	HOPKINS	
City Of Birth:	HOPKINS COUNTY	
City(Other):		
DECEDENT'S SSN		
SSN:	403-99-2343	
Social Security Missing Value Variable:		
SSN Verification Status:	PASSED	

119

Certification 2

The screenshot shows the 'MEDICAL DATA ENTRY' interface with a 'Medical Certification' dialog box open. The dialog box contains the following information:

Decedent's Information

First Name: Paul
Middle Name: Mortuary
Last Name: Bearer
Suffix:

Death Registration

Date of Death:
Time of Death:
Place of Death:

Record certified successfully.

PLEASE ENTER PIN

To the best of my knowledge, death occurred at the time, date, and place, and due to the cause(s) and manner stated.
Certifier Pin: [input field]

Buttons: Preview, Cancel, Certification, Ok, Cancel, Forgot PIN

The background form fields are as follows:

DECEDENT'S SEX		
Sex:	FEMALE	
Maiden Last Name:	TOWNSEND	
DECEDENT'S BIRTHPLACE		
State/Country: (Please click checkbox to filter countries only)	<input type="checkbox"/> TEXAS	
County Of Birth:	HOPKINS	
City Of Birth:	HOPKINS COUNTY	
City(Other):		
DECEDENT'S DATE OF BIRTH		
Date of Birth:	10/01/1949	
Age Units:	YEARS	
Age:	73	
DECEDENT'S SSN		
SSN:	403-99-2343	
Social Security Missing Value Variable:		
SSN Verification Status:	PASSED	

120

Oh No! That Wasn't Right!

Medical amendment



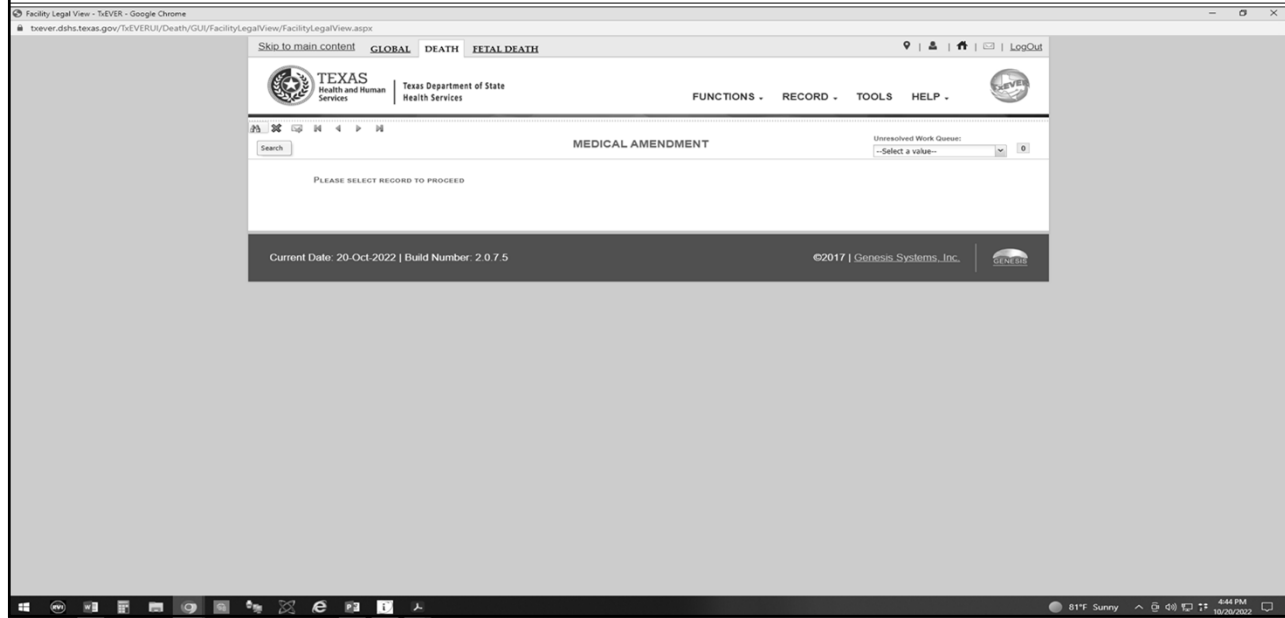
121

Medical Amendment

A screenshot of a web application interface. The browser address bar shows 'txever.dshs.texas.gov/TxEVERUI/Death/Home.aspx'. The page has a header with navigation links: 'Skip to main content', 'GLOBAL', 'DEATH', and 'FETAL DEATH'. Below this is a logo for 'TEXAS Health and Human Services' and the text 'Texas Department of State Health Services'. A user greeting reads 'BRAD CUMMINGS, welcome to the Texas Department of State Health Services'. A 'FUNCTION' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Medical Data Entry', 'Statistical Report Review', 'Medical Amendment', 'Switch Location', and 'Exit Application'. To the right of the menu is a 'Services!' section with a 'Show Dashboard' link. The footer contains 'Current Date: 20-Oct-2022 | Build Number: 2.0.7.5' and '©2017 | Genesis Systems, Inc.' The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the date and time as 4:09 PM on 10/20/2022.

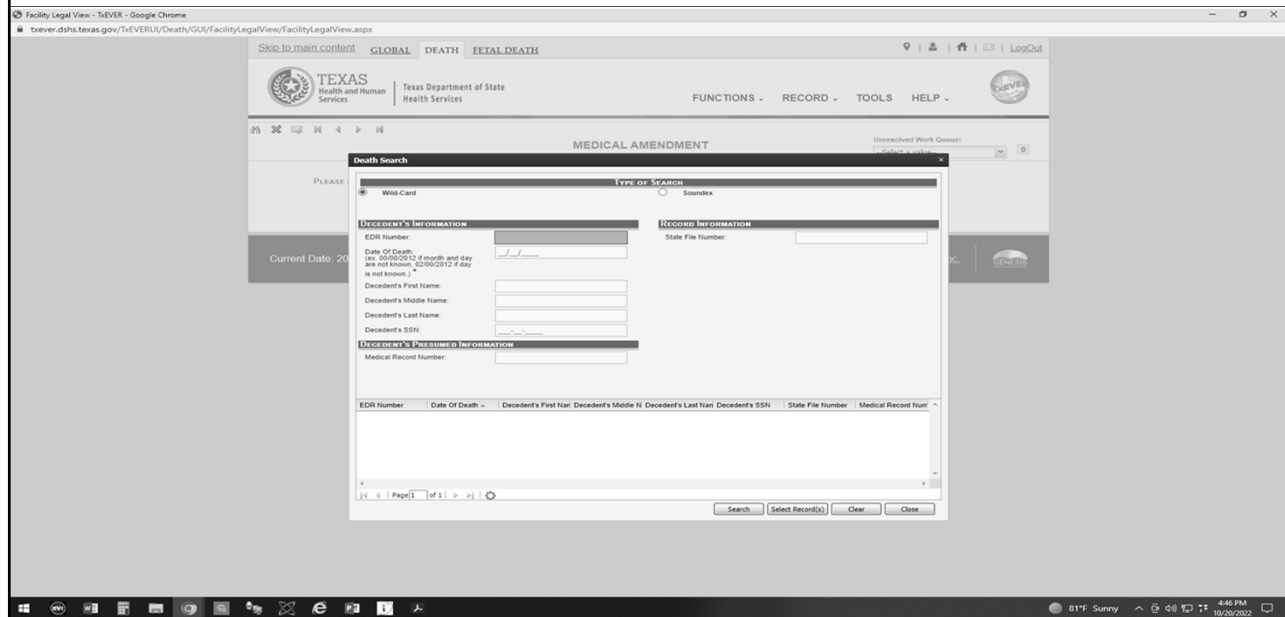
122

Medical Amendment 2



123

Medical Amendment 3



124

When and How to Start?

The screenshot shows an email interface. On the left is a sidebar with folders: INBOX, Autopsy and Inquest, 1st Term, 2nd term, 2020, 2021, 2022, City of Sulphur Springs, Death Certification, 1st Term, 2nd term, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and Defendant GPS. The main area displays a list of emails from 'No_Reply@dshs.texas.gov' with subject lines like 'You Have Been Assigned a Death Record to Complete'. A specific email is open, titled 'You Have Been Assigned a Death Record to Complete', dated September 12, 2022. The email content includes:

Electronic Death Record #000044445435263 has been designated to you for Medical Data Entry.

Decedent Name: Paul Bearer
 Date of Death: 09/11/2022
 Funeral Home: MURRAY-ORWOSKY FUNERAL HOME
 Certifier: HOPKINS COUNTY JP PCT 2

Please visit <https://txever.dshs.texas.gov/TxEverUI/Welcome.htm> to view/update the details.

If it has been more than 90 days since your last login to TxEVER - please contact your facility's local administrator to unlock your account.

This is an automatically generated E-mail. Please do not 'Respond' to this E-mail as a response by E-mail will not be processed.

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Medical Amendment 4

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Facility Legal View - TxEVER' interface. The page title is 'txever.dshs.texas.gov/TxEverUI/Death/GUI/FacilityLegalView/FacilityLegalView.aspx'. The header includes the Texas Department of State Health Services logo and navigation links: FUNCTIONS, RECORD, TOOLS, HELP. The main content area is titled 'MEDICAL AMENDMENT' and features a 'Death Search' form. The form has a 'Type of Search' dropdown set to 'Wild Card' and a 'Soundex' option. It contains several input fields for 'DECEDENT INFORMATION' (EDR Number, Date Of Death, Decedent's First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, SSN) and 'RECORD INFORMATION' (State File Number, Medical Record Number). A table below the form lists search criteria: EDR Number, Date Of Death, Decedent's First Name, Decedent's Middle Name, Decedent's Last Name, Decedent's SSN, State File Number, and Medical Record Number. The interface includes a search bar, 'Select Record(s)', 'Clear', and 'Close' buttons.

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Medical Amendment 5

Facility Legal View - T&EVER - Google Chrome
 txever.dshs.texas.gov/txEVERUI/Death/GUI/FacilityLegalView/FacilityLegalView.aspx

Services | Health Services | FUNCTIONS - RECORD - TOOLS HELP -

MEDICAL AMENDMENT | Unresolved Work Queue: Bearer, Paul, 09/10/2022

DECEDENT'S INFORMATION	
Date Of Death:	09/10/2022
Decedent's First Name:	Paul
Decedent's Middle Name:	Mortuary
Decedent's Last Name:	Bearer
Decedent's Suffix:	
Decedent's Sex:	MALE
Decedent's Date Of Birth:	05/15/1963
Decedent's State/Country Of Birth:	TEXAS
Birth State File Number:	

RECORD INFORMATION	
State File Number:	168974052
State File Date:	09/15/2022

PARENTS INFORMATION	
Father/Parent 2 First Name:	Moty
Father/Parent 2 Last Name:	Bearer
Mother/Parent 1 First Name:	Morticia
Mother/Parent 1 Last Name:	Bearer

DISPOSITION AND FACILITY	
Method Of Disposition:	CREMATION
Facility Name:	MURRAY-GROWSKY FUNERAL HOME
Funeral Service License:	

CERTIFIER	
Certifier Name:	BRAD CUMMINGS

PLACE OF DEATH INFORMATION	
Place Of Death:	SPRINGL, HOPKINS, TX 75483
Place Of Death County:	HOPKINS
Place Of Death Town:	SULPHUR SPRINGS

DECEDENT'S PRESUMED INFORMATION	
Time Of Death:	08:25
Time Of Death Indicator:	AM

MANNER OF DEATH	
Manner Of Death:	NATURAL

Go

Current Date: 20-Oct-2022 | Build Number: 2.0.7.5 | ©2017 | Genesis Systems, Inc. | 4:51 PM 10/20/2022

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Medical Amendment 6

Medical Amendment - T&EVER - Google Chrome
 txever.dshs.texas.gov/txEVERUI/Death/GUI/MedicalAmendment/MedicalAmendment.aspx?nProcessID=1&FromWhere=FACILITYLEGALVIEW#5

Skip to main content | LogOut

TEXAS Texas Department of State Health and Human Services | PROCESS -

EDR: 000044445435263 | MEDICAL AMENDMENT | Unresolved Work Queue: TANTON, JEFFREY, 09/11/2022

Help tips

Unresolved	Decedent's Presumed Name
Demographic 1	Prefix: First Name: Paul
Demographic 2	Middle Name: Mortuary Last Name: Bearer
Demographic 3	Suffix: Sex: MALE
Demographic 4	Medical Record Number: ME Case Number:
Demographic 5	

Medical	CERTIFIER
Medical 1	Certifier Name: BRAD CUMMINGS
Medical 2	Certifier Title: JP
Medical 3	Street Address: 1280 JEFFERSON
Comments	Country: TEXAS
ACTIVITY:	City/Town: SULPHUR SPRINGS
Field Name:	Zip Ext: Zip: 75422
Field Order:	Zip: 75422
Unresolved Allowed:	Certifier License: Date Certifier Signed: 09/10/2022
Action:	Retrieving Record:

DATE AND TIME OF DEATH	
Date Of Death: 09/10/2022	Time Of Death Type: FOUND ON
Time Of Death: 08:25	Time Of Death Indicator: AM

81°F Sunny | 4:54 PM 10/20/2022

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Medical Amendment 7

Medical Amendment - T&EVER - Google Chrome
 txever.dshs.texas.gov/txEVERUI/Death/GUI/MedicalAmendment/MedicalAmendment.aspx?nProcessID=1&FromWhere=FACILITYLEGALVIEW#

Please enter Enter the chain of events - that caused the death D

Unresolved

Demographic 1
 Demographic 2
 Demographic 3
 Demographic 4
 Demographic 5
 Medical 1
 Medical 2
 Medical 3
 Comments

ACTIVITY
 Enter the chain of events that caused the death.
 Field Status: Unresolved
 Unknown Allowed: No
 Action: Updating Record

CAUSE OF DEATH - Part 1

Cause Of Death Is Pending

Enter the chain of events - diseases, injuries, or complications that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Approximate Interval: Onset to Death

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death.)

a. TYPE 3 MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION SECONDS

b. DUE TO (or as a consequence of) HYPERTENSIVE ARTERIOSCLEROTIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE MONTHS

c. DUE TO (or as a consequence of) HYPERTENSION MONTHS

d. DUE TO (or as a consequence of)

CAUSE OF DEATH - Part 1

Cause Of Death Is Pending

Enter the chain of events - diseases, injuries, or complications that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Approximate Interval: Onset to Death

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death.)

a. CARDIAC ARREST DUE TO HYPERTENSIVE ARTERIOSCLEROTIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE SECONDS

b. DUE TO (or as a consequence of) HYPERTENSION MONTHS

c. DUE TO (or as a consequence of) DIABETES YEARS

d. DUE TO (or as a consequence of)

Comments

Confirm Changes

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Medical Amendment 8

Medical Amendment - T&EVER - Google Chrome
 txever.dshs.texas.gov/txEVERUI/Death/GUI/MedicalAmendment/MedicalAmendment.aspx?nProcessID=1&FromWhere=FACILITYLEGALVIEW#5

Skip to main content

TEXAS Texas Department of State Health and Human Services

PROCESS -

EDR: 000044445435263

MEDICAL AMENDMENT

Unresolved Work Queue: TANTON, JEFFREY, 09/11/2022

Help tips

Unresolved

Demographic 1
 Demographic 2
 Demographic 3
 Demographic 4
 Demographic 5
 Medical 1
 Medical 2
 Medical 3
 Comments

ACTIVITY
 Field Status: Unresolved
 Unknown Allowed: No
 Action: Retrieving Record

Decedent's Personal Name

Prefix: First Name: Paul
 Middle Name: Mortuary Last Name: Bearer
 Suffix: Sex: MALE
 Medical Record Number: ME Case Number:

CERTIFIER

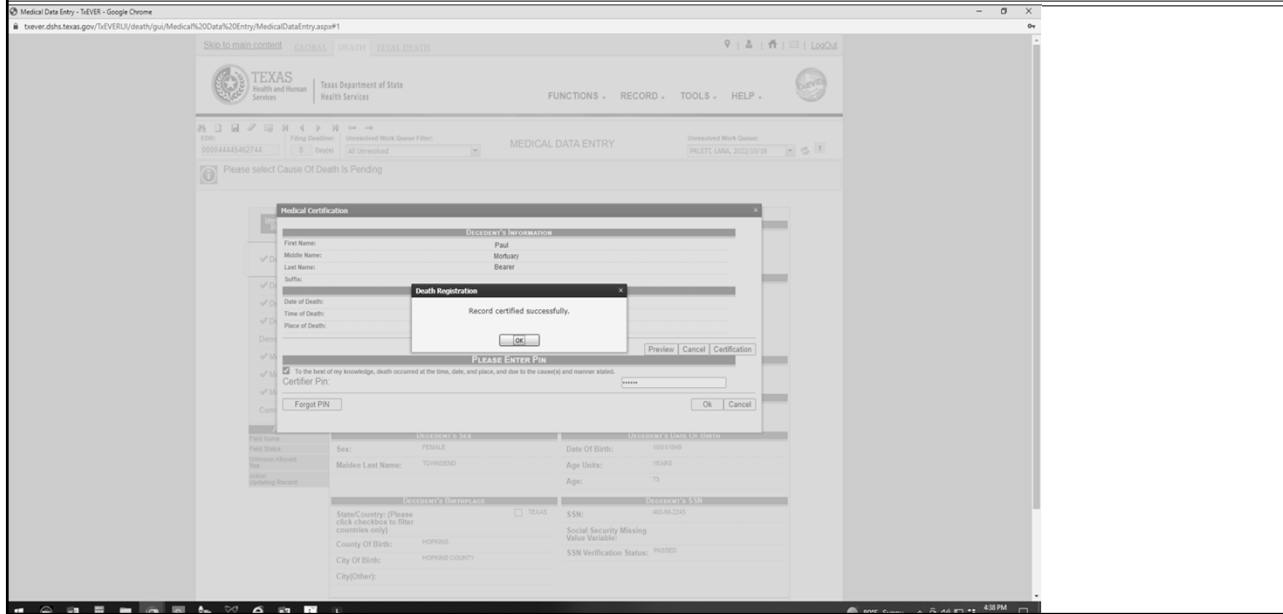
Certifier Type: JP Certifier Name: BRAD CLARKINS
 Certifier Office Name: HOPKINS COUNTY JP PCT 2 Certifier Title: JP
 Street Address: 1280 JEFFERSON State/Country: TEXAS
 County: HOPKINS City/Town: SULPHUR SPRINGS
 Zip: 75482 Zip Ext:
 Certifier License: Date Certifier Signed: 09/12/2022

DATE AND TIME OF DEATH

Date Of Death: 09/11/2022 Time Of Death Type: FOUND ON
 Time Of Death: 0025 Time Of Death Indicator: AM

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Certification

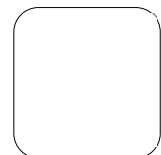


131

Scenario 1

Woman falls from a ladder 10 feet while cleaning her windows at home. She fractures her skull.

- a. Traumatic Brain Injury
- b. Depressed Neurocranium fracture
- c. Fall from 10 feet

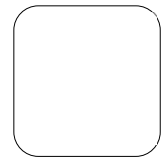


132

Scenario 2

Man went into shock after being hit by a truck while crossing the road and fracturing his ribs, femur, and skull.

- a. Traumatic shock
- b. Fractures of the femur, ribs, and skull
- c. Pedestrian struck by vehicle



133

Scenario

David Decedent is a 51 year old male who has died at a local assisted living facility.

When David was 36 he was shot in the torso, which resulted in paraplegia. The gunshot wound was caused by a disgruntled employee who shot the David and several others at a warehouse facility.

According to medical records, David has had multiple bouts of urinary tract infections secondary to urinary catheterization. He developed urosepsis, which is complicated by pneumonia and he is placed on hospice care. He died three days later.

What would you certify as the cause and manner of death?

134

Manner Of Death – Homicide

Cause Of Death – Gunshot Wound To The Torso

Contributors – Urosepsis, Pneumonia

The decedent required catheterization due to paraplegia caused by the gunshot wound of the torso.

The length of time between the injury and death does not change the manner, whether an individual dies immediately due to a gunshot wound, at the E.R., or years later due to complications from the gunshot wound. As long as the injury led to a direct, continuous sequence of events unbroken by any efficient intervening event.

135

“But-for” Principal

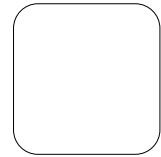
But For The Injury Or Disease, Would The Death Occur?

- But for the assault, years prior, would the death occur?
- But for a heart attack, would drowning have occurred?
- But for the work-related infection, would death have occurred?

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But...It is so annoying!!!

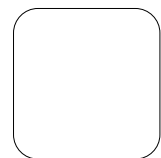
- You can just click through
- It isn't telling you that you are wrong
- Just reminding you to use the best words/terms to describe what happened
- National data is pulled by specific search terms, so using the best possible term helps researchers connect data to help people



137

How can we improve death certificate reporting?

- Focus on better ways to state the cause of death
- Remember what **not** to include
- Try to be as specific as possible about a disease
 - Google!
 - Talk to a Doc!
 - Talk to another JP
 - Talk to a Medical Examiner
- Make sure to include all required info
- Tell the **whole** story!



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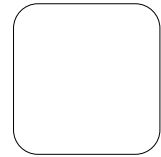
Examples of Things to Avoid

Never:

- old age, failure to thrive

Great for b, c, d, or Part II but not the primary cause:

- bed-ridden, anorexia, dementia



139

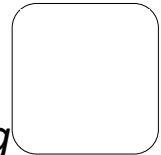
Examples of Better Terminology

Cancer example

- *Instead of cancer or even lung cancer*
- Adenocarcinoma of the right upper lung with metastases to the brain

Abbreviation example

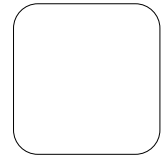
- *Instead of AIDs*
- acquired immunodeficiency syndrome



140

Death Certificates After a Disaster

- “An occurrence that has resulted in property damage, deaths, and/or injuries that overwhelms the community resources” – *Federal Emergency Management Association*
- Examples: wildfires, flooding, hurricanes



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CAUSE OF DEATH (See instructions and examples)		Approximate interval Onset to death
<p>32. PART I. Enter the <u>chain of events</u>—diseases, injuries, or complications—that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.</p>		
<p>IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) -----></p>	<p>a. Acute or exacerbated chronic kidney failure Due to (or as a consequence of):</p>
<p>Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the UNDERLYING CAUSE (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) LAST</p>	<p>b. Type II Diabetes Due to (or as a consequence of):</p>
	<p>c. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):</p>
	<p>d. _____</p>
<p>PART II. Enter other <u>significant conditions</u> contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in PART I</p>		<p>NOT PERFORMED? <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Unable to receive dialysis for 6 days due to Hurricane Maria related power outage at local treatment center.</p>		<p>BY FINDINGS AVAILABLE TO CAUSE OF DEATH? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>37. MANNER OF DEATH</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/> Homicide</p>		
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Accident <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Investigation</p>		
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Suicide <input type="checkbox"/> Could not be determined</p>		

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CAUSE OF DEATH (See instructions and examples)

32. **PART I.** Enter the chain of events—diseases, injuries, or complications—that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line. Add additional lines if necessary.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) → a. Asphyxia
Due to (or as a consequence of):

Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the **UNDERLYING CAUSE** (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death) **LAST** → b. Smoke inhalation from Woolsey Wildfire
Due to (or as a consequence of):

c. _____ Due to (or as a consequence of):

d. _____

PART II. Enter other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I.

Asthma

WAS AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED? Yes No

WERE AUTOPSY FINDINGS COMPLETE? Yes No

COMPLETE THE CAUSE OF DEATH

143

Work related death:

Regardless if in the course of the usual occupation

At work: On a break or at lunch in the parking lot of the premises of work

Not at work: engaged in personal recreational activity on the premises of work

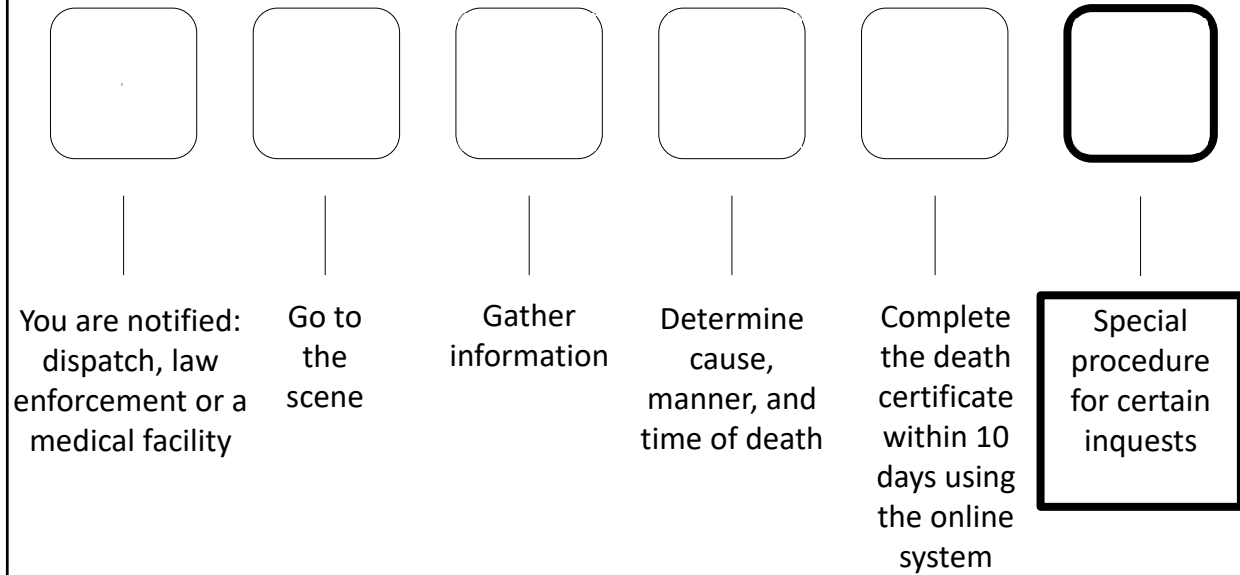
At work: Working for compensation at home

Not at work: A visitor at an employer

- ◇ Tobacco Use
- ◇ Injury related
- ◇ Pregnancy within the last year
- 10 -54 years

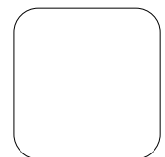
144

Process of an Inquest



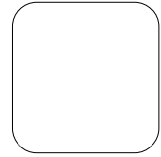
145

Types of Deaths With Unique Procedures



146

Child Death

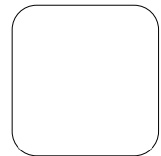


- **Remember, must** perform an inquest on a child if they are under 6 years old
- Specifically, to look for abuse or neglect

49.01(8) Code of Criminal Procedure

147

Exceptions

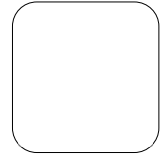


- Death is expected and is due to a congenital or neoplastic disease
- Death by infectious disease and certain criteria is met
- Death is from a motor vehicle accident

Family Code § 264.513(c) & 264.514 (a)

148

Reporting of a Child Death



- If you determine abuse or neglect was involved, you must immediately notify an appropriate local law enforcement agency
- and***
- Notify the county child fatality review team not later than the 120th day after the date the death is reported to you

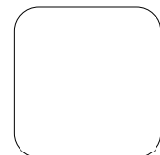
Family Code § 264.514 (b)

149

Reporting of an Unidentified Child Death

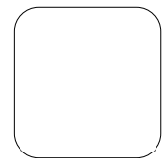
- Shall report the death to the missing children and missing persons information clearinghouse of the Department of Public Safety and the national crime information center not later than the 10th working day after the date the investigation began.

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.04 (d)



150

Inmate Or Jail Death

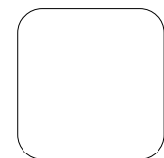


151

Inmate Death

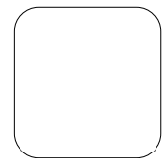
- **Must** perform an inquest if a person dies in prison (except lawful execution or natural causes when attended by a physician) or in jail
- Likely notified by the sheriff or person in charge of the institution
- The jail or prison (and potentially the Texas Rangers) will conduct their own independent investigation and they have a report to file with the state

Code of Criminal Procedure Arts. 49.04 & 49.18



152

Unidentified Bodies

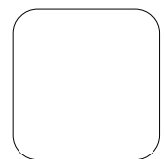


153

Testing to Determine ID

- May order an investigative or laboratory test
 - Proper removal of a sample from a body
 - May order any person specially trained in identification work to complete any tests necessary to determine the identity of the deceased person

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10(k)

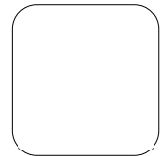


154

Medical Examination

- Requires very specific information gathered by a medical expert conducting the identification examination
- May also involve a forensic anthropologist
- UNT Center for Human Identification accepts bodies

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.10 (l)-(n)



155

What Happens to the Body After an Inquest?

156

Body Transportation

- To move a body to a funeral home (or out of state), need a **Burial Transit Permit**.
- A cemetery or crematory shall accept the permit as authorization for burial, cremation, or other disposal of the body in Texas.



25 Texas Administrative Code 181.2(b) & Texas Health and Safety Code § 193.008

157

Next of Kin

- Next of kin determines where the body goes
- To determine next of kin, see (next slide):
 - Health & Safety Code § 711.002
 - If no one claims the body, JP decides what happens
 - Typically, there is a funeral home rotation list
 - County will pay for the transportation
 - Refer to your County Commissioners
 - May have an agreement with the State Anatomic Board
 - May end in a pauper's burial

Health & Safety Code §§ 691.023, 711.02, & 694.002(a)

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Health & Safety Code § 711.002

- Specific written directions from the deceased;
- The person designated in a written instrument signed by the deceased;
- The deceased's surviving spouse;
- Any one of the deceased's surviving adult children;
- Either one of the deceased's surviving parents;
- Any one of the deceased's surviving adult siblings;
- Any one or more of the duly qualified executors or administrators of the deceased's estate; or
- Any adult person in the next degree of kinship in the order named by law to inherit the estate of the deceased

159

How Are You Involved in the Cremation Process?

- 1) Sign cremation order
- 2) Sign waiver of 48-hour cremation period

Health & Safety Code §§ 761.051 & 716.004(a)

160

48 Hour Waiver

- If the family wishes to cremate **before 48 hours**, you may be asked to sign a waiver
 - Do not have to sign the waiver if you have concerns

Health & Safety Code §§ 761.051 & 716.004(a)

161

Authority to Cremate

- Must certify that an autopsy was ordered or not needed

- Only have authority on inquests that you performed

Health & Safety Code §§ 761.051 & 716.004(a)

162

Reminder!

May not cremate if the body of a deceased **person is unidentified**

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.09(e)

163

Organ Donation

- May allow organ procurement with consent from the family
- Some exceptions if issues with a murder case
- More info & resources in the Deskbook!

Health & Safety Code § 692A.009

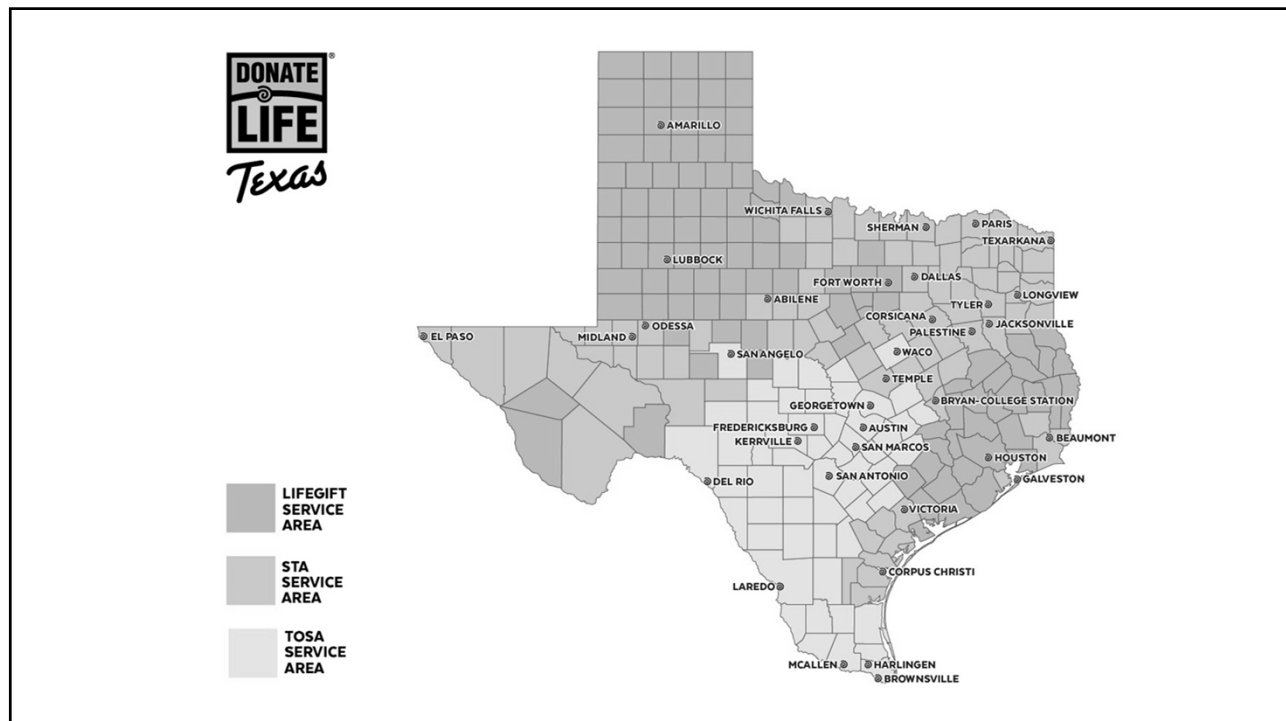
164

Organ Procurement Organizations

Organization	Headquarters	Phone
LifeGift	2510 Westridge, Houston, TX 77054	800-633-6562
Southwest Transplant Alliance (STA)	8190 Manderville Ln, Dallas, TX 75231	800-788-8058
Texas Organ Sharing Alliance	5051 Hamilton Wolf Rd, San Antonio, TX 78229	866-685-0277



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Partnering Tissue & Eye Banks



Organization	Headquarters	Phone
Lions Eye Bank of Texas	6565 Fannin St, Houston, TX 77030	713-798-5500
Great Plains Lions Eye Bank	3601 4 th St, Suite BAB104-HSC, Lubbock, TX 79430	809-743-2242
Miracles In Sight - Lone Star Division	102 E. Wheeler, Manor, TX 78653	800-552-9956, ext. 2009
San Antonio Eye Bank	9150 Huebner Rd, Suite 105, San Antonio, TX 78240	210-614-1209
Western Texas Lions Eye Bank	2030 Pulliam St #4, San Angelo, TX 76905	325-653-8666
Shriner Hospital Tissue Banks	815 Market St, Galveston, TX 77550	409-770-6600
South Texas Blood & Tissue Center	6211 IH 10 West, San Antonio, TX 78201	800-292-5534
Fort Worth Eye & Tissue Bank	1125 S Jennings Ave, Suite 110, Fort Worth, TX 76104	817-927-2020
United Tissue Resources	4300 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78756	512-206-1321
Transplant Services Center, U.T. Southwestern Medical Center	5601 Southwestern Medical Ave, Dallas, TX 75235	800-433-6667
Texas Donor Network	1709 E Tyler Ave, Suite 9, Harlingen, TX 78550	855-496-2108
Texas Donor Services	1607 N Main St, Pearland 77581	832-664-9644
Biograft Transplant Services, Inc.	11205 South Main St, Suite 114, Houston, TX 77025	713-840-9101

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Important Reporting Requirements

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Deaths that Must Be Reported?

<https://injury.dshs.texas.gov/injury/login.do>

Trauma injuries, including drowning and spinal injuries

Child abuse

Communicable diseases

Aviation Incidents

*See Deskbook for full details and forms to use for reporting.
Starts at Chapter 8*

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Deaths that Must Be Reported?

- - **TXDOT**
 - 11 days
- **Unidentified persons - Missing Persons Clearinghouse**
 - 10 days
 - mpch@dps.texas.gov
-

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Death of a Foreign National

- If a non-US Citizen dies in the US, the JP must notify the appropriate consulate
- This can be done by fax, email, or mail
- There is a handbook, forms, and other resources from the US Department of State & the Texas Attorney's General's Office with more details – *You can find it in the Deskbook.*

Vienna Convention on Consular Relations;
Article 37 (a)

171

Other reporting - Optional

- **Infant Death**
- **Suicide**
- **Consumer Protection Bureau**

172

Other reporting - Optional

- **Reopening an inquest**
 - Art. 49.041
 - Any, All, or None
- **Disinterment - Gravedigger**
 - TX CCP Art 49.09, HSC 711.004
 - Constitutional County Court
 - Cemetery Assoc.

173

Inquest Records

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Records

- Shall make an inquest record for each inquest
- All papers must be marked with the case number and be clearly indexed and be maintained in the office of the justice of the peace and be made available to the appropriate officials upon request.

Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 49.15.

175

How Long Do You Keep Inquest Records

Permanently.

*Code of Criminal Procedure 49.15(b) & Local
Retention Schedule Record Number LC2375-02(a)-(c)*

176

Open Records

A JP **may not** withhold an autopsy report or other inquest record from public inspection

- *Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. JC-0542 (2002)*

Curve ball

Vehicle for improper purposes

- Recordkeeping and Reporting Deskbook – Chapter 2 (C) (I)

177

Release of Death Certificate

- Confidentiality of a death certificate is in effect for 25 years after the date of death and may be released only to a properly qualified applicant.
- If the deceased is unidentified, it is public information 1 year after the death.

Texas Government Code § 552.115(a)(2)

178

Why are Reporting and Documentation so Important?

179

This Will be One of the Hardest and Most Difficult Parts of Your Job

- But it is *so important* to do it well.

- Here's how you can learn more:
 - Deskbook
 - Recordings for Credit
 - Live Webinars
 - Self-Paced Modules
 - Discussing issues with mentor judges
 - Other trainings available through TxEVER and the Office of Vital Statistics throughout the state

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Remember!

Justices of the Peace are swearing to the information
in the Death Certificate