

Community Housing

Guide to determining reportable deaths

Upon becoming aware of a death, a staff member must immediately consider whether the death is a **reportable death** under the Coroners Act 2003.

The questions below are a guide to help determine whether a death is a reportable death. If the answer to any of the questions is, or could be, YES, then the death is reportable.

A death in custody is a special instance of a reportable death.

Deaths in custody must be reported immediately by phone to the Coroner's Office. All other reportable deaths must be reported immediately by phone, to SAPOL or the Coroner's Office.

If in any doubt – either about whether the death is reportable or whether it has already been reported – the staff member or their delegate must report the death. Failure to report a reportable death is an offence.

Deaths in Custody: report the death to the Coroner's Office only

Was the person detained under any Act or law, including any Act or law providing for home detention?

Was the person in the process of being apprehended or being held at any place by a person authorised to do so under any Act or law of the State or by a person authorised to do so under the law of any other jurisdiction?

Was the person evading apprehension by any authorised person?

Was the person escaping or attempting to escape from any place or authorised person?

Other Reportable Deaths: report the death to the Coroner's Office or to SAPOL

Was the death unexpected, unnatural or unusual?

Was the death due to an accident, suicide, heat stroke, drowning, choking, or following an apparent improvement in general health?

Was the death in violent or suspicious circumstances?

Is there evidence of recent assault? Are there any factors surrounding the death that seem inconsistent or difficult to explain?

Was the cause of death unknown?

Was the death within 24 hours of being discharged from hospital, or the person having sought emergency treatment at a hospital?

Was the death during or as a result, or within 24 hours, of a surgical, invasive or diagnostic procedure including an anaesthetic for the purposes of conducting a procedure?

Was the person protected under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1993*?

People with mental incapacity may be protected through the appointment of a guardian for the protection of their personal wellbeing and/or through the appointment of an administrator, who manages their estate. Check the 'Legal Documents' section of the client record.

Was the person protected under the *Aged and Infirm Persons' Property Act 1940*?

People who by reason or age, illness, or impairment, are unable to manage their affairs or are liable to be subjected to undue influence regarding their estate, may be protected under this Act. Check the 'Legal Documents' section of the client record.

Was the person in the custody of or under the guardianship of the Minister under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*?

Was the person a patient in an approved treatment centre under the *Mental Health Act 1993*?

Was the person a resident of a licensed supported residential facility under the *Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992*?

Was the person accommodated in a hospital or other treatment facility for the purposes of being treated for drug addiction?

Was the death during, as a result of, or within 24 hours of receiving medical treatment to which consent has been given under Part 5 of the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1993*?

People with a mental incapacity may not be able to consent to medical treatment. This law enables guardians, relatives and/or the Guardianship Board to provide that consent.

Was the cause of death not certified by a doctor?
