

Rapid Release of a Loved One After Death

Information for the Bereaved

Bereavement

New Death Certification legislation will come into force on the 9th of September 2024. After this date, all deaths (except for deaths requiring referral to Coroner) will need to be independently reviewed and MCCD countersigned by a Medical Examiner (ME) before Registration can take place at the Registry Office. This is a legal requirement.

When Rapid Release is requested, our aim is to release the deceased from our care within 24 hours of verification of death.

1. When Can We Facilitate a Rapid Release

Rapid Release of a deceased patient can be facilitated between 8am and 8pm daily if:

- The death has been reviewed by a Medical Examiner (ME).
- A Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is completed by a doctor and countersigned by a ME.
- The ME and doctor agree that a coroner referral is NOT required.

Note – If a Coroner's referral is required a Rapid Release cannot be provided and your relative will remain in our care until the Coroner has authorised release.

The ME Office will call you to inform a referral to the coroner will be completed and the doctor will be asked to complete the referral to the coroner.

2. Rapid Release Process

- If the ME and doctor agree on a cause of death and establish a referral to the coroner is not required, the doctor will complete the MCCD and the ME will countersign the MCCD.
- The ME Office will call you to discuss the cause of death and confirm they will be sending the MCCD to the Registry office.
- Your relative will be transferred to the hospital mortuary for release to your chosen funeral director.

Please note - your relative cannot be directly released from the ward.

3. Operating Times for ME and Mortuary Services

- There will be a ME available to review a death and countersign the MCCD between the following times
 - Mon-Fri 8am to 4pm.
 - Weekends and Bank Holidays 9am to midday (excluding Christmas Day).
- The Mortuary can facilitate the release of deceased patients between the hours of 8am – 8pm daily.

4. How to Request a Rapid Release

Monday – Friday 8am – 4pm

Please contact the Certificate Office on 0121 507 3464.

The Medical Examiner Office can be contacted on 0121 507 3473 or 0121 507 3099 during these times.

Monday – Friday- after 4pm

Weekends and Bank Holidays

When a death occurs after 4pm the death will be reviewed by the ME the following day. Please inform a member of staff on the ward who will contact the Clinical Nurse Practitioner (CNP) on duty.

The CNP will contact the ME to review the death during the ME operating times detailed in section 3.

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email swbh.library@nhs.net.



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