GOVERNMENT OF NAGALAND
DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
NAGALAND:: KOHIMA


ADVISORY

Sub: Covid-19: Medical Certification of Cause of Death, Postmortem Examination & Disposal of the Unclaimed Dead Bodies.

A. Medical Certification of Cause of Death:
1. It is mandatory under the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969, for the medical practitioner who has attended the deceased during the latter’s last illness to issue the certificate as to the cause of death in Form No.4 for institutional deaths and 4A for non-institutional deaths. No fees shall be charged for issuing the certificate.

2. However, when the person is not attended by any medical practitioner or the vital event not occurred in a hospital, such deaths can be reported to the local Registrar, by the head of the family in case it occurs in a house; by the jail in-charge if it occurs in a jail; by the person in charge of the property if it occurs in public or private property; and by the headman of the village or the in-charge of the local police station in case the body is found deserted in that area.

3. A Legal Inquiry or an Inquest is required to ascertain the cause of all sudden, suspicious or unnatural deaths as per Code of Criminal Procedure Sections 174 and 176. In such cases, the certificate may be filled by the medical examiner on the basis of evidence noticed by him.

   If the death is not clearly of natural category i.e. other than natural or cause not known/ doubtful, it is mandatory for the doctor to inform the police of occurrence of the death for further course of action.

4. The detachable portion of form containing only the fact of death without disclosing the cause of death may either be signed by the certifier or the medical officer of the hospital and handed over to the relatives of the deceased.

5. The duly filled in form of medical certificate of cause of death is to be sent to the local Registrar of Births and Deaths along with the death report in the prescribed format within the prescribed time limit of twenty one days.

B. Postmortem Examination:
1. Death due to Covid-19 is a non medico legal case and therefore does not warrant postmortem examination unless in case of sudden, suspicious or unnatural deaths.

2. If autopsy is to be performed, infection prevention control practices should be strictly adopted as per the SOP- “Standard Guidelines for Medico-Legal Autopsy in Covid-19 Deaths in India”, as the deceased person may be confirmed Covid-19 or Suspected cases.

3. In disaster situations, legal obligations of carrying out of a post-mortem in each and every case can be waived off after Inquest by the competent legal/judicial authorities having jurisdiction over the area, which is usually a Class I Magistrate or the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner or Commissioner of Police in metropolitan cities appointed by the State government as per the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

4. Unless legally warranted, no postmortem samples shall be collected.

C. Disposal of the Unclaimed Dead Bodies:
1. Section 34 (g) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, states that, for the purpose of assisting, protecting or providing relief to the community, in response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster, the Disaster Authority may make arrangements for disposal of the unclaimed dead bodies.
2. The responsibility of disposal of the unclaimed bodies during disaster lies with the District Magistrate or Collector or Deputy Commissioner.

D. SOPs and Advisories on Covid-19 End Life Care and Management of Dead Body can be downloaded from the following links:


2. Guidance for appropriate recording of Covid-19 related deaths

   http://district%20covid-19%20death%20review%20committee%20report%20streamlining%20%2819th%20August%2C%202020%29/

4. ICMR/NCDIR- Guidance for appropriate recording of COVID-19 related deaths in India.

5. ICMR/NCDIR- Cause Of Death: All What You Want To Know!
   https://ncdirindia.org/e-mor/MCCD_WEB.aspx

6. Physicians’ Manual on Medical Certification of Cause of Death

7. Standard Guidelines for Medico-Legal Autopsy in Covid-19 Deaths in India

   https://nsdma.nagaland.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-04/SOP%20for%20Disposal%20of%20Dead%20Bodies%20of%20COVID-19%20Dated%2013th%20April%202020.pdf


10. MOHFW Covid-19: Guideline on Dead Body Management

11. NDMA- Management of the Dead in the Aftermath of Disasters

(See Signature)
Principal Director

No: DHFW/COVID-19/2019-20/ S047-52
Dated Kohima, the 23rd Aug 2020.

Copy To:
1. The Deputy Secretary to the Chief Secretary, Nagaland for kind information.
2. The Principal Secretary, Home Department for kind information.
3. The Commissioner & Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department for kind information.
4. The Mission Director (NHM)/ Director (H)/ Director (FW)/ PD (NSACS)/ PD (NHP)/ SPO (IDSP) for information and necessary action.
5. The Deputy Commissioner & Chairman of DTF/ Chief Medical Officer/ Medical Superintendent of all districts for information and necessary action.

(See Signature)
Principal Director