

# Death Certification in Scotland

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A guide to death certification and registration changes in Scotland



**The Scottish  
Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

## What this leaflet is about

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The arrangements for death certification and registration in Scotland are changing.

From 13 May 2015 all deaths must be registered before burial or cremation can take place.

## Background

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Every death in Scotland must be certified by a doctor who completes a form called a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD). This is also known as the Form 11.

If you are registering a death you must take the MCCD to a registrar. A death cannot be registered without the MCCD. A death may be registered in any registration office in Scotland and must be registered within eight days of the date of death.

With changes being made to the way deaths are registered in Scotland, it is important that you try and register the death at the earliest opportunity.

Most registration offices operate an appointment system so you should contact your local office as soon as possible.

Once registration is complete you will be given a Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14). This is the document that confirms that the death has been registered and is required before a burial or cremation can go ahead.



## **New Review Service**

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National legislation has changed the process of registration of deaths and requires Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) to review a random sample of certificates.

From 13 May 2015 a random selection of certificates will be selected for review, through the registration system. These reviews are designed to check the quality and accuracy of certificates and to improve how this information is recorded.

Reviews will be conducted by a team of medical reviewers, all of whom are experienced doctors.

Further information on the review service can be read here –  
[www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification)

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## **Investigation of a death by the Procurator Fiscal**

Deaths which are reported to the Procurator Fiscal will not be included in those selected for review. Further information on the role of the Procurator Fiscal in the investigation of deaths can be found at:

[www.copfs.gov.uk/publications/deaths](http://www.copfs.gov.uk/publications/deaths)



## How this affects you

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If the death you are registering is selected for review you may not immediately be able to complete the death registration. The registrar will explain the review process and timescales, and will contact you when the review is complete.

You can still make initial funeral arrangements while the review is underway. However, the funeral itself cannot take place until the review is completed and a Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14) is produced.

This can be collected from the registrar or sent to you or sent direct to the person arranging the funeral to allow the funeral to go ahead.

If you need the funeral to go ahead quickly, in special circumstances you may be granted advance registration. You can read more about how to apply for **advance registration** here [www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification)