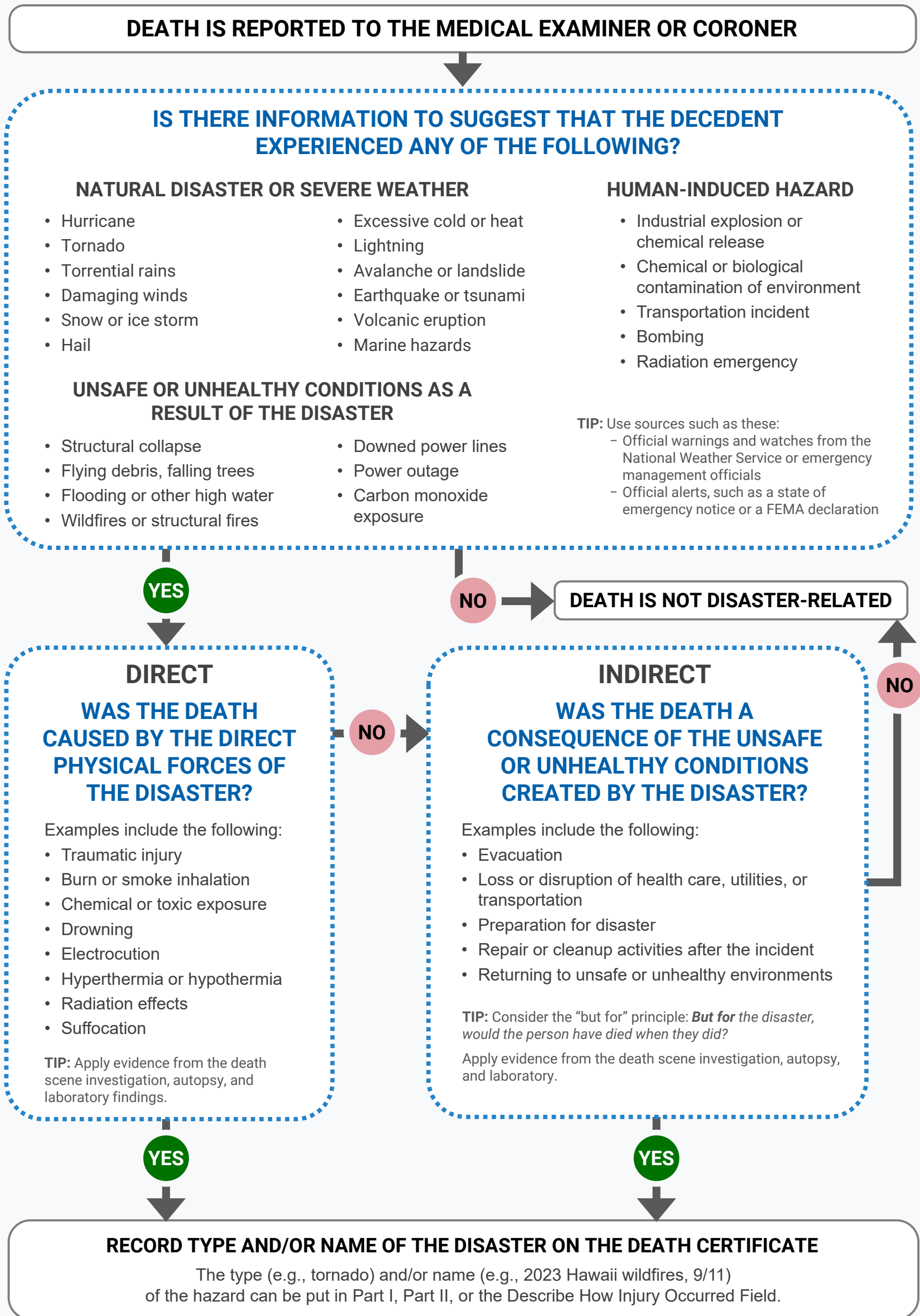


Determining and Completing Death Certificates for Disaster-Related* Deaths

Scan or click the QR code to review the Vital Statistics Reporting Guidance on Disaster-related Deaths



*Disasters include natural disasters, severe weather, and human-induced hazards



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Determining and Completing Certificates for Disaster-Related Deaths Text Version

This flow chart demonstrates the process for considering whether a death is disaster-related and if so, how to complete the death certificate.

After a death is reported to the medical examiner or coroner, consider: *is there information to suggest that the decedent experienced 1) natural disaster or severe weather (e.g., hurricane, excessive cold or heat), 2) human-induced hazard (e.g., industrial explosion, bombing), or 3) unsafe or unhealthy conditions as a result of the disaster (e.g., structural collapse, power outage)*. If no, the death is not disaster-related.

If yes, next consider: *was the death caused by the direct physical forces of the disaster (e.g., traumatic injury, chemical or toxic exposure)*. If yes, record the type (e.g., tornado) and/or name (e.g., 2023 Hawaii wildfires) of the disaster on the death certificate. This can be put in Part I, Part II, or the Describe How Injury Occurred Field. Apply evidence from the death scene investigation, autopsy, and laboratory findings.

If no, consider: *was the death a consequence of the unsafe or unhealthy conditions created by the disaster (e.g., evacuation, repair or cleanup activities after the event)*. Consider the “but for” principle: *but for the disaster, would the person have died when they did?*

If no, the death is not disaster-related. If yes, record the type and/or name of the disaster on the death certificate.