

Table 1: Selected Characteristics of Death Requiring Investigation by State

Developed by Lisa Caucci of Public Health Law Program and Margaret Warner of National Center for Health Statistics. Analysis was performed in February–May 2013 on laws current as of January 31, 2013. Analysis is based solely on statutory and regulatory language and does not examine application or implementation of the referenced laws. Published January 2015 on the Public Health Law Program's Coroner/Medical Examiner Laws website: <http://www.cdc.gov/phlp/publications/coroner/>. CDC and the Public Health Law Program are not responsible for and cannot verify changes made to Excel files after they are downloaded from CDC's website. For the most current information, please visit the Public Health Law Program's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/phlp>.



Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	DC	FL	GA	HI	ID
Intent/manner of death														
Accident/casualty	41		x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Suicide	41		x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Violence	38			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Homicide	28				x	x		x		x				x
Abortion/criminal abortion (maternal or fetal)	21				x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Criminal	16		x			x					x			
Sexual crime/abuse	5					x								
Trauma	5													
Domestic violence	1													
During commission of crime	1		x											
Circumstances														
Suspicious/unusual/unnatural	44		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x ²	x	x
Suddenly when in apparent good health (under this age)	35		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
At home/found dead	8				x									
Requested by police or DA/ordered by court	3									x				
Accident due to negligence of other	1													
Warranted in opinion of medical examiner	1		x											
Health or health care related														
Unattended by physician (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	30	x	x		x36h	x	x		x	x10d	x	x	x	
W/i 24 hrs of hospital/medical facility admission or if DOA	10		x							x			x	
W/i 24 hrs of nursing home admission	1													
W/i 24 hrs of being admitted to hospital unconscious w/o regaining consciousness	1											x		
Assoc with diagnostic/therapeutic procedure	9		x							x				
Physician unable/unwilling to sign death certificate	7						x							
Not currently under care of health care provider	6			x										
Anesthesia or surgery related	6			x					x	x				
Terminal/bedfast/hospice unattended (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	5				x30d	x20d								
Malpractice possible	1													
Cause of death														
Death may constitute threat to public health	27		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Poisons/drugs/toxic agents	20		x		x	x			x		x			
Employment related	19		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Unknown/unexplained causes	15	x	x				x			x				x
Thermal/chemical/radiation/electrical	14						x	x		x				

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	DC	FL	GA	HI	ID
Drug use/abuse/overdose	12					x								
Fire/explosion	9				x	x								
Drowning	9				x	x								
Alcoholism	7					x								
Gun/firearms	6					x								
Motor vehicle accident (including pedestrians)	4				x									
Motor vehicle accident, no external evidence of lethal traumatic	2				x									
Other public conveyance/transportation	2													
In the public interest, not otherwise specified	1													
Hit and run	1													
Custody of others														
Jail/police custody	40		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
State facility/custody or care of state	17		x			x				x		x		
Mental health institution	9		x			x								
Foster care	4		x											
Execution	1											x		
Characteristics of the body														
Unidentifiable/skeletal/suspected human remains	15			x	x									
To be cremated/buried at sea (unexhumable)/unavailable for pathological study	8							x		x	x			
Brought into juris w/o proper medical certification/investigation	7									x	x			
Unclaimed	5													
Body found near roadway/railway	2				x									
Decomposed so that injury/crime cannot be ruled out	2				x									
Disposed of in offensive way	1													
Child/fetal														
Children w/o known illness or under care (under this age)	15		x18		x18							x7		x
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome suspected (under this age)	10					x				x1 ¹				
Unattended fetal death before birth	5													
Child abuse suspected	3				x									
Stillbirth	3													x
Stillbirth, unattended by physician	3													
Child in state custody	2		x											
Fetal death	2													
Child, suspicious circumstance or unknown cause	1													
Number of characteristics	n/a	2	20	8	24	23	10	10	11	20	13	12	7	9

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN
Intent/manner of death												
Accident/casualty	41	x	x	x	x	x	x	x ³	x	x		x
Suicide	41	x		x	x	x	x	x ³	x	x		x
Violence	38	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Homicide	28	x		x		x	x	x ³	x			x
Abortion/criminal abortion (maternal or fetal)	21	x		x					x	x	x	
Criminal	16				x		x			x		
Sexual crime/abuse	5	x		x					x			
Trauma	5	x					x					
Domestic violence	1	x										
During commission of crime	1											
Circumstances												
Suspicious/unusual/unnatural	44	x	x		x	x	x		x	x		x
Suddenly when in apparent good health (under this age)	35	x	x	x	x	x ⁴⁰	x	x	x	x	x	x
At home/found dead	8		x				x			x		
Requested by police or DA/ordered by court	3						x					
Accident due to negligence of other	1											
Warranted in opinion of medical examiner	1											
Health or health care related												
Unattended by physician (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	30	x					x ^{36h}		x		x ^{48h⁴}	x
W/i 24 hrs of hospital/medical facility admission or if DOA	10									x		x ⁵
W/i 24 hrs of nursing home admission	1									x		
W/i 24 hrs of being admitted to hospital unconscious w/o regaining consciousness	1											
Assoc with diagnostic/therapeutic procedure	9								x	x		x
Physician unable/unwilling to sign death certificate	7							x				
Not currently under care of health care provider	6				x	x			x			
Anesthesia or surgery related	6											x
Terminal/bedfast/hospice unattended (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	5			x ^{30d}							x ^{48h⁴}	
Malpractice possible	1											
Cause of death												
Death may constitute threat to public health	27			x			x	x				
Poisons/drugs/toxic agents	20					x	x	x ³	x	x		
Employment related	19									x		x
Unknown/unexplained causes	15	x		x			x					
Thermal/chemical/radiation/electrical	14	x		x			x					x

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN
Drug use/abuse/overdose	12	x					x			x		
Fire/explosion	9					x	x					x
Drowning	9	x				x	x		x			
Alcoholism	7	x					x			x		
Gun/firearms	6						x					
Motor vehicle accident (including pedestrians)	4					x						
Motor vehicle accident, no external evidence of lethal traumatic	2					x						
Other public conveyance/transportation	2									x		
In the public interest, not otherwise specified	1				x							
Hit and run	1					x						
Custody of others												
Jail/police custody	40			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
State facility/custody or care of state	17			x				x		x		
Mental health institution	9			x						x		
Foster care	4									x		
Execution	1											
Characteristics of the body												
Unidentifiable/skeletal/suspected human remains	15			x		x		x		x		x
To be cremated/buried at sea (unexhumable)/unavailable for pathological study	8											x
Brought into juris w/o proper medical certification/investigation	7							x				
Unclaimed	5			x								
Body found near roadway/railway	2					x						
Decomposed so that injury/crime cannot be ruled out	2					x						
Disposed of in offensive way	1											
Child/fetal												
Children w/o known illness or under care (under this age)	15			x2				x18		x18		x
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome suspected (under this age)	10			x		x		x				
Unattended fetal death before birth	5								x	x		x
Child abuse suspected	3					x				x		
Stillbirth	3											
Stillbirth, unattended by physician	3											x
Child in state custody	2			x								
Fetal death	2									x		
Child, suspicious circumstance or unknown cause	1				x							
Number of characteristics	n/a	15	4	18	9	20	20	13	14	24	5	18

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND	OH
Intent/manner of death													
Accident/casualty	41	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Suicide	41	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Violence	38	x	x					x	x	x	x	x	x
Homicide	28	x	x			x		x	x		x	x	
Abortion/criminal abortion (maternal or fetal)	21	x	x				x	x		x			
Criminal	16			x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Sexual crime/abuse	5											x	
Trauma	5												
Domestic violence	1												
During commission of crime	1												
Circumstances													
Suspicious/unusual/unnatural	44	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Suddenly when in apparent good health (under this age)	35	x	x				x60		x		x		x ⁸
At home/found dead	8	x											
Requested by police or DA/ordered by court	3												
Accident due to negligence of other	1												
Warranted in opinion of medical examiner	1												
Health or health care related													
Unattended by physician (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	30	x36h	x36h						x	x	x		
W/i 24 hrs of hospital/medical facility admission or if DOA	10			x			x	x					
W/i 24 hrs of nursing home admission	1												
W/i 24 hrs of being admitted to hospital unconscious w/o regaining consciousness	1												
Assoc with diagnostic/therapeutic procedure	9						x		x				
Physician unable/unwilling to sign death certificate	7									x			
Not currently under care of health care provider	6						x						
Anesthesia or surgery related	6								x				
Terminal/bedfast/hospice unattended (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	5	x30d											
Malpractice possible	1								x				
Cause of death													
Death may constitute threat to public health	27	x	x	x			x	x					
Poisons/drugs/toxic agents	20						x		x		x	x	
Employment related	19			x			x	x	x				
Unknown/unexplained causes	15	x		x								x	
Thermal/chemical/radiation/electrical	14	x	x					x				x	

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND	OH
Drug use/abuse/overdose	12	x					x					x	
Fire/explosion	9						x					x	
Drowning	9											x	
Alcoholism	7								x				
Gun/firearms	6						x					x	
Motor vehicle accident (including pedestrians)	4						x					x	
Motor vehicle accident, no external evidence of lethal traumatic	2												
Other public conveyance/transportation	2						x						
In the public interest, not otherwise specified	1												
Hit and run	1												
Custody of others													
Jail/police custody	40	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
State facility/custody or care of state	17							x	x	x ⁷	x	x	
Mental health institution	9												
Foster care	4						x					x	
Execution	1												
Characteristics of the body													
Unidentifiable/skeletal/suspected human remains	15	x					x					x	
To be cremated/buried at sea (unexhumable)/unavailable for pathological study	8						x						
Brought into juris w/o proper medical certification/investigation	7	x		x			x				x		
Unclaimed	5	x											
Body found near roadway/railway	2												
Decomposed so that injury/crime cannot be ruled out	2												
Disposed of in offensive way	1												
Child/fetal													
Children w/o known illness or under care (under this age)	15	x ²					x ¹⁸	x ³	x				
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome suspected (under this age)	10	x											
Unattended fetal death before birth	5						x	x					
Child abuse suspected	3												
Stillbirth	3												
Stillbirth, unattended by physician	3								x				
Child in state custody	2												
Fetal death	2			x ⁶									
Child, suspicious circumstance or unknown cause	1												
Number of characteristics	n/a	20	10	10	0	3	23	14	17	9	12	20	5

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN	TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV
Drug use/abuse/overdose	12		x	x	x					x			x	
Fire/explosion	9											x	x	
Drowning	9			x									x	
Alcoholism	7			x									x	
Gun/firearms	6									x			x	
Motor vehicle accident (including pedestrians)	4													
Motor vehicle accident, no external evidence of lethal traumatic	2													
Other public conveyance/transportation	2													
In the public interest, not otherwise specified	1													
Hit and run	1													
Custody of others														
Jail/police custody	40	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
State facility/custody or care of state	17						x	x		x		x		x
Mental health institution	9						x			x	x	x		x
Foster care	4													
Execution	1													
Characteristics of the body														
Unidentifiable/skeletal/suspected human remains	15			x		x	x	x	x					
To be cremated/buried at sea (unexhumable)/unavailable for pathological study	8	x		x				x						
Brought into juris w/o proper medical certification/investigation	7													
Unclaimed	5			x			x						x	
Body found near roadway/railway	2													
Decomposed so that injury/crime cannot be ruled out	2													
Disposed of in offensive way	1		x											
Child/fetal														
Children w/o known illness or under care (under this age)	15						x ² ⁹	x	x ⁶ ¹⁰					
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome suspected (under this age)	10			x			x			x		x1.5		
Unattended fetal death before birth	5													
Child abuse suspected	3													
Stillbirth	3			x									x	
Stillbirth, unattended by physician	3					x								
Child in state custody	2													
Fetal death	2													
Child, suspicious circumstance or unknown cause	1													
Number of characteristics	n/a	11	10	21	11	8	15	11	11	17	8	14	17	10

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	WI	WY
Intent/manner of death			
Accident/casualty	41	x	x
Suicide	41	x	x
Violence	38		x
Homicide	28	x	
Abortion/criminal abortion (maternal or fetal)	21	x	
Criminal	16		x
Sexual crime/abuse	5		
Trauma	5		
Domestic violence	1		
During commission of crime	1		
Circumstances			
Suspicious/unusual/unnatural	44	x	
Suddenly when in apparent good health (under this age)	35		
At home/found dead	8		x
Requested by police or DA/ordered by court	3		
Accident due to negligence of other	1		
Warranted in opinion of medical examiner	1		
Health or health care related			
Unattended by physician (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	30	x30d	x60
W/i 24 hrs of hospital/medical facility admission or if DOA	10		
W/i 24 hrs of nursing home admission	1		
W/i 24 hrs of being admitted to hospital unconscious w/o regaining consciousness	1		
Assoc with diagnostic/therapeutic procedure	9		
Physician unable/unwilling to sign death certificate	7	x	x
Not currently under care of health care provider	6		
Anesthesia or surgery related	6		
Terminal/bedfast/hospice unattended (within this time period, h=hours, d=day)	5		
Malpractice possible	1		
Cause of death			
Death may constitute threat to public health	27		x
Poisons/drugs/toxic agents	20	x	x
Employment related	19		
Unknown/unexplained causes	15	x	x
Thermal/chemical/radiation/electrical	14		

Selected characteristic of deaths requiring investigation	No. states	WI	WY
Drug use/abuse/overdose	12		x
Fire/explosion	9		
Drowning	9		
Alcoholism	7		
Gun/firearms	6		
Motor vehicle accident (including pedestrians)	4		
Motor vehicle accident, no external evidence of lethal traumatic	2		
Other public conveyance/transportation	2		
In the public interest, not otherwise specified	1		
Hit and run	1		
Custody of others			
Jail/police custody	40		x
State facility/custody or care of state	17		x
Mental health institution	9		x
Foster care	4		
Execution	1		
Characteristics of the body			
Unidentifiable/skeletal/suspected human remains	15		x
To be cremated/buried at sea (unexhumable)/unavailable for pathological study	8		
Brought into juris w/o proper medical certification/investigation	7		
Unclaimed	5		x
Body found near roadway/railway	2		
Decomposed so that injury/crime cannot be ruled out	2		
Disposed of in offensive way	1		
Child/fetal			
Children w/o known illness or under care (under this age)	15		
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome suspected (under this age)	10		
Unattended fetal death before birth	5		
Child abuse suspected	3		x
Stillbirth	3		
Stillbirth, unattended by physician	3		x
Child in state custody	2		
Fetal death	2		
Child, suspicious circumstance or unknown cause	1		
Number of characteristics	n/a	9	18