

**UPDATE TO:  
SPECIFICATIONS FOR COLLECTING AND EDITING  
THE UNITED STATES STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH --  
2003 REVISION  
May, 2004**

**Changes resulting from clearance by the US Department of Health and Human Services, November 2003:**

Item 35. Did tobacco use contribute to death. Wording of instructions were modified.

**Changes recommended by the Data Analysis Committee, May 2004:**

Cover page

Added note about specifications replacing Instruction manual part 4

Overview /Need for specifications

Modified to stress the importance of the electronic systems following the flow of the worksheets

Overview/General principals 6, 7, 9

Modified to recognize state legal requirements for adding categories/items.

Added recommendation for use of “hot keys” for unknown values.

Overview /Need for specifications

A new section entitled “Features Integral to the Electronic Systems” has been added

Overview/Transmission File

Principal 2 has been modified to delete requirement for software and table version numbers.

Non-NCHS items (e.g., item 8. Ever in US armed forces?) are included in the document.

Item 1. Decedent’s legal name. Changed “surname” to “last name” and modified instructions on how the informant verifies the name, use of common spellings of names, and added phrasing about State law and use of non-English letters and symbols.

Item 2. Sex. Updated the url for the Instruction manual.

Item 3. Social security number. Added instructions on use of alphabetic prefixes, a list of numbers that SSA won’t issue, editing of these impossible numbers, entry for unknown number for State and NCHS information.

Item 5. Date of birth. Modified instructions about spelling out the month and acceptability of numeric abbreviations for dates.

Item 6. Birthplace. Modified text and information related to Canadian births, added a literal variable in the processing variable list, and added a note on the use of incremental browsing.

Item 7. Decedent's residence. Added instructions for homeless decedents, unknown country of residence and zip code, instructions for item 11 if the decedent lived somewhere other than US territory or Canada, situation in which information could be auto filled into item 12, updated reference to Instruction manual part 8a, and added a note on the use of incremental browsing.

Item 9. Marital status. Modified wording of the bullet on the scenario of being not remarried but married previously.

Item 11. Father's name. Added parts of name to item description, changed "surname" to "last name," modified instructions on how the informant verifies the name, use of common spellings of names, and added phrasing about State law and use of non-English letters and symbols, expanded instruction about an unknown name, and included format under state file considerations section.

Item 14. Place of death. Added comment in state file considerations section that States may want to add information such as a NPI number.

Items 15-17. Facility. Added comment in state file considerations section that States may want to add information such as a NPI number, a note on the use of incremental browsing, and a comment on using previously completed information to simplify data entry.

Items 24,25. Date and time pronounced dead. Modified instructions about spelling out the month and acceptability of numeric abbreviations for dates, added information on the differences in the 24-hour clock ranges, and moved the mention of the two ranges out of the processing.

Items 29,30. Date and time of death. Modified instructions about spelling out the month and acceptability of numeric abbreviations for dates, added information on the differences in the 24-hour clock ranges, moved the mention of the two ranges out of the processing, and inserted the comments on the modifier variable before the state file considerations.

Item 32. Cause of death. Update urls, EDC to EDR, change cancer of stomach to gastric adenocarcinoma in an example, add instruction about temporary age and sex fields to enable some edits for the certifier, and add instruction about sequelae to the rare cause query section.

Item 33,34. Autopsy. Add further explanation of how toxicological exam fits in with complete/partial autopsy, remove unknown categories, and eliminate edits that applied to unknown category.

Item 37,45. Manner of death and certifier. Added an instruction about defaults and manner, dropped the section on referral to ME, and added comment in state file considerations section that States may want to add information such as a NPI number.

Item 38,39. Date and time of injury. Modified instructions about spelling out the month and acceptability of numeric abbreviations for dates, added information on the differences in the 24-hour clock ranges, and moved the mention of the two ranges out of the processing.

Item 40. Place of injury. Added a sentence about the importance of literal entries as it relates to assignment of codes.

Item 42. Location of injury. Added a note on the use of incremental browsing.

Item 53. Decedent's race. Statements added to under "State File Considerations" clarifying NCHS position on coding and editing race data and the future consideration of HL7.

Items 54,55. Decedent's usual occupation/kind of business/industry. Added statements clarifying intent of probes and what to do if the probes yield no additional information.

File processing item: State of birth (location 671-672). Updated reference to Instruction manual part 8a.

Appendices. Updated Appendix A to reflect newer Instruction manual, references to Instruction manual in Appendix C, and added reference to EXCEL table in Appendices G and I.