



Ohio Revised Code

Section 3705.16 Statement of facts in certificates - death certificate.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

(A) For purposes of this section notwithstanding section 3705.01 of the Revised Code, "fetal death" does not include death of the product of human conception prior to twenty weeks of gestation.

(B) Each death or fetal death that occurs in this state shall be registered with the local registrar of vital statistics of the district in which the death or fetal death occurred, by the funeral director or other person in charge of the final disposition of the remains. The personal and statistical information in the death or fetal death certificate shall be obtained from the best qualified persons or sources available, by the funeral director or other person in charge of the final disposition of the remains. The statement of facts relating to the disposition of the body and information relative to the armed services referred to in section 3705.19 of the Revised Code shall be signed by the funeral director or other person in charge of the final disposition of the remains.

(C)(1) For certification of the cause of death, the funeral director or other person in charge of the final disposition of the remains shall present the death or fetal death certificate to one of the following individuals:

(a) If a death or fetal death occurs under any circumstance described in section 313.12 of the Revised Code, the coroner in the county in which the death occurs or the medical examiner;

(b) If a death or fetal death occurs under a circumstance other than as described in section 313.12 of the Revised Code, the attending physician of the decedent, except that, in the case of decedent who did not have an attending physician, the physician who, either in person or through a means of telehealth, last examined or treated the decedent for any illness or condition.

(2) After the death or fetal death certificate is presented, the cause of death shall be certified and the medical certificate of death shall be completed and signed as follows:

(a) If the death or fetal death certificate is presented to the coroner or medical examiner, the coroner,



or a deputy coroner, medical examiner, or deputy medical examiner serving in an equivalent capacity, shall certify the cause of death.

(b) If the death or fetal death certificate is presented to the physician described in division (C)(1)(b) of this section, that physician shall certify the cause of death.

(3) The medical certificate of death shall be completed and signed by the coroner or medical examiner, physician who attended the decedent, or physician who last examined or treated the decedent, as appropriate, within forty-eight hours after notification of the death or fetal death.

A coroner or medical examiner may satisfy the requirement of signing a medical certificate showing the cause of death or fetal death as pending by signing it within forty-eight hours after notification of the death or fetal death, provided that the coroner or medical examiner shall sign any other medical certificate of death or supplementary medical certification within forty-eight hours after the cause of death has been determined.

A physician described in division (C)(1)(b) of this section may satisfy the requirement of signing a medical certificate by signing with an electronic signature.

(D) A coroner, medical examiner, or physician who acts in good faith in accordance with this section, without fraud or malice, and upon reasonable belief of the cause of death or fetal death based on the information, if any, presented is not subject to civil liability or professional disciplinary action for any act or omission in certifying the cause of death or in completing and signing the medical certificate of death.

(E) Any death certificate registered pursuant to this section shall contain the social security number of the decedent, if available. A social security number obtained under this section is a public record under section 149.43 of the Revised Code.