Clinical Practice Guidelines: Other/Recording of life extinct (ROLE)/management of a deceased person

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To ensure a consistent approach to the management of the Recording of life extinct (ROLE)/management of a deceased person.</td>
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<td>Scope</td>
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Recording of life extinct (ROLE)/management of a deceased person

Unless the obvious death criteria is met, the following criteria must be present before a determination is made that life is extinct:

- No palpable carotid pulse;
- No heart sounds heard for 30 seconds;
- No breath sounds heard for 30 seconds;
- Fixed dilated pupils; and
- No response to centralised stimuli.

Following determination that life is extinct, the paramedic is to complete a Life extinct form and the eARF.

Details regarding the criteria relied upon to determine life extinct are to be recorded on the eARF.

The paramedic is then required to record the following in the eARF:

I declare life extinct at [record exact time of declaration]

In circumstances where it is clear that a death is not a reportable death as defined under the Coroners Act, it would be appropriate to convey this information to the QPS.

An example of a death that is clearly not reportable is one that is an expected outcome of a diagnosed condition, and the patient’s medical practitioner has indicated that he or she will issue a death certificate.

**NOTE:** If the death has occurred in New South Wales, the NSW Police Service should be notified.

**Reporting a death to the coroner**

When the QPS is notified of a death, the police officer in receipt of the information will determine if the death is one that must be reported to a coroner. The police officer will then report the death in writing to the Office of the State Coroner.

A reportable death is defined in S8 of the Coroners Act 2003 (Qld) and includes:

- The identity of the person is not known;
- The death was violent or unnatural;
- The death happened in suspicious circumstances;
- The death was a health care related death;
- It is unlikely that a death certificate will be issued;
- The death was a death in custody; or
- The death occurred in the course of, or as a result of, police operations.

**Notification of death to police**

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is to be notified of all deaths and provided with information that will assist the police to determine if the death is a reportable death as defined in the Coroners Act 2003 (Qld) (see following for the definition of reportable death).
Death in care involves a death in one of the following circumstances:

- The person had a disability as defined in the Disability Services Act 2006 and was living or receiving services in/from a level 3 residential service;[2]
- The person was being taken to, or detained in, a place that is an authorised mental health service or was, at the time of death, under an emergency examination order under the Mental Health Act 2000;[3]
- The person was a child placed in care under the Child Protection Act 1999;[4] or
- The person was under the guardianship of the chief executive under the Adoption of Children Act 1964.[5]

Movement of a deceased person

In circumstances where the death is a reportable death, the body should not be moved until police have attended.

If movement of the body is deemed to be necessary for safety or compelling practical or cultural reasons, the paramedic must consult with police beforehand and comply with any directions that police may issue.

If the death has occurred in a public place, cover the body with a sheet or similar item.

Transportation of a deceased person

It is not the role of the QAS to transport deceased persons.

In limited circumstances, it may be necessary and appropriate for QAS paramedics to transfer a deceased person from the place at which the death occurred, to the closest mortuary.

Transfer of a deceased person must not take place without police authorisation.

QAS paramedics must comply with any direction issued by police as it relates to the transfer of the deceased person.

Death during transport

Road transport

If the death occurs during ambulance transportation, the relevant QAS Communications Centre is to be notified and the ambulance is to be diverted to a facility as advised by the QAS Communications Centre.

Air transport

If the death occurs during aerial transport, the pilot of the aircraft is to be advised of the death.

A decision regarding the appropriate destination will be decided in consultation with the Queensland Coordination Centre. Where possible, it would be appropriate to return to the port of origin and notify QPS accordingly.
**Note:** Officers are only to perform procedures for which they have received specific training and authorisation by the QAS.