



Coroners Court of Victoria

A Health Practitioner's guide for writing a statement for the Coroner

The Coroners Court of Victoria has developed this guideline to assist health practitioners when requested by the Coroner for a statement.

1. Structure of the statement

- The person making the statement should state their full name, position held and a brief description of their qualifications and experience.
- Ideally the dates and times of admission(s), the reason(s) for admission(s), procedure(s) performed, and any discharge(s) should be written in chronological order.
- Where treatment is not related to an admission to a health service, the statement should set out the sequence of treatment including the dates of consultation, any tests ordered, the results of those tests, the advice provided and any referral to other health service providers.
- As it is impractical for the Coroner to obtain statements from every staff member involved in the care of the patient, it may be appropriate for the person requested to make a statement to summarise the care given by other staff by making reference in their statement that the summary is based on information extracted from the medical record.
- The person preparing the statement should refer to the health service's medical record (or their own medical record) of the deceased person. If there are difficulties obtaining access to a copy of the relevant medical record, practitioners should contact the Coroners Court.
- If there are any inconsistencies between the medical record and the person's recollection of events, these should be noted in the statement.
- It is important that any specific questions contained in the Coroner's request are answered in the statement.
- It may also be necessary to refer to any policies and protocols applicable at the time of the death. A copy of these should be attached to the statement. It may also be relevant to describe any revisions made to these since the death. (Practitioners are advised to check with their employer or the relevant health service to ensure any comments on revision or alteration of policies are accurate).
- If there has been a significant elapse of time from the date of the deceased person's death to the time of the Coroner's request for the statement, the writer should not assume something did or did not happen based solely on their health service's policies and protocols in place at the time of the death.
- Unless the Coroner asks for an opinion on a matter, the statement should only contain factual information.
- The statement will be read by the Coroner, but may also be read by other interested parties such as family members and lawyers. For this reason it is important that any medical terminology or abbreviations used are explained the first time each is used.

2. Timeframe

- The statement should be forwarded to the Coroner as soon as practicable, but before the due date stipulated in the request.
- If the writer believes that they will not be able to meet the due date, they must notify the Coroners Court or investigating Victoria Police member as soon as possible.

3. Errors

- Where a coronial investigation progresses to inquest, minor errors can be corrected at the time oral evidence is given.

4. Witnessing the statement

- The statement to the Coroner does not need to be witnessed.

5. Submitting the statement

- The statement must be submitted by the due date to either the Coroners Court or to the Investigating Victoria Police member as instructed in the request.
- Once submitted, the statement will be considered by the Coroner along with any other statements and information gathered in the course of the coronial investigation.

6. Inquests

- The decision whether or not to hold an inquest is made by the Coroner.

7. Information on the Coronial process

- For further information about the coronial process, please visit the website at www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au or contact the relevant Coroners Court.

To report a Reportable or Reviewable death, ring 1300 309 519
and ask for Coronial Admissions and Enquiries.

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