

MANAGEMENT OF THE DECEASED PERSON

(Revised: July 2019)



CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING LIFE EXTINGUISHED

(taken from ACTAS procedure – “Procedure for starting and stopping resuscitation [adult and paediatric]”)

Check the following, and then repeat all tests within 3 – 5 minutes.

- No palpable carotid pulse AND
- No heart sounds heard AND
- No breath sounds heard AND
- Fixed and dilated pupils

OPTIONAL (as appropriate to the clinical setting):

- No response to centralised stimulus⁺
- No motor (withdrawal) response or facial grimace in response to painful stimulus[#]

⁺ centralised stimulus – trapezius muscle squeeze, supraorbital pressure or sternal rub

[#] no motor (withdrawal) response or facial grimace in response to painful stimulus assessed by pinching inner aspect of elbow

DEATHS REPORTABLE TO THE ACT CORONER

If it appears that the patient meets any of the conditions below, the ACT Coroner has jurisdiction and ACT Policing must be informed:

1. Dies violently, or unnaturally, in unknown circumstances; or
2. Dies under suspicious circumstances; or
3. Dies, and the death appears to be completely or partially attributable to an operation or procedure; or
4. Dies and the doctor has not given a certificate about the cause of death; or
5. Dies, not having been attended by a doctor at any time within the period commencing 6 months before the death; or
6. Dies after an accident where the cause of death appears to be directly attributable to the accident (this may include falls in any circumstances [including in aged care facilities], motor vehicle accidents, etc.); or
7. Dies in custody (this includes where the person was on a psychiatric treatment order [PTO] or other mental health order).

(Taken from ACTAS procedure – “Guideline for management of the deceased person”)

For further information regarding the management of the deceased person, refer to the procedures referenced in this document, on the ACTAS intranet portal.