
SENATE BILL 5739

State of Washington

56th Legislature

1999 Regular Session

By Senators Thibaudeau and Deccio

Read first time 02/05/1999. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to certificates of death or fetal death; and
2 amending RCW 70.58.170 and 70.58.180.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 70.58.170 and 1979 ex.s. c 162 s 1 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 The funeral director or person in charge of interment shall file
7 the certificate of death or fetal death. In preparing such
8 certificate, the funeral director or person in charge of interment
9 shall obtain and enter on the certificate such personal data as the
10 certificate requires from the person or persons best qualified to
11 supply them. He or she shall present the certificate of death to the
12 physician, physician's assistant, or advanced registered nurse
13 practitioner last in attendance upon the deceased, or, if the deceased
14 died without medical attendance, to the health officer, coroner, or
15 prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction, who shall thereupon certify
16 the cause of death according to his or her best knowledge and belief
17 and shall sign the certificate of death or fetal death within two days
18 after being presented with the certificate unless good cause for not
19 signing the certificate within the two days can be established. He or

1 she shall present the certificate of fetal death to the physician,
2 physician's assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, midwife,
3 or other person in attendance at the fetal death, who shall certify the
4 fetal death and such medical data pertaining thereto as he or she can
5 furnish.

6 **Sec. 2.** RCW 70.58.180 and 1961 ex.s. c 5 s 14 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 If the death occurred without medical attendance, the funeral
9 director or person in charge of interment shall notify the coroner, or
10 prosecuting attorney if there is no coroner in the county. If the
11 circumstances suggest that the death or fetal death was caused by
12 unlawful or unnatural causes or if there is no local health officer
13 with jurisdiction, the coroner, or if none, the prosecuting attorney
14 shall complete and sign the certification, noting upon the certificate
15 that no physician, physician's assistant, or advanced registered nurse
16 practitioner was in attendance at the time of death. In case of any
17 death without medical attendance in which there is no suspicion of
18 death from unlawful or unnatural causes, the local health officer or
19 his or her deputy, the coroner and if none, the prosecuting attorney,
20 shall complete and sign the certification, noting upon the certificate
21 that no physician, physician's assistant, or advanced registered nurse
22 practitioner was in attendance at the time of death, and noting the
23 cause of death without the holding of an inquest or performing of an
24 autopsy or post mortem, but from statements of relatives, persons in
25 attendance during the last sickness, persons present at the time of
26 death or other persons having adequate knowledge of the facts.

27 The cause of death, the manner and mode in which death occurred, as
28 noted by the coroner or if none, the prosecuting attorney or the health
29 officer and incorporated in the death certificate filed with the bureau
30 of vital statistics of the board of health shall be the legally
31 accepted manner and mode by which the deceased came to his or her death
32 and shall be the legally accepted cause of death.

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