

Confirmation of Circulatory Death (DCD)



ADDRESSOGRAPH/PATIENT LABEL

For the purposes of post mortem donation, **the fact of death shall be determined by at least two fully licensed physicians** in accordance with accepted medical practice. No physician who has had any association with the proposed recipient that might influence the physician's judgment shall take any part in the determination of the fact of death of the donor. No physician who took any part in the determination of the fact of death of the donor shall participate in any way in the transplant procedures.

Section 1 - Circulatory Arrest

By signing below, I verify that I have assessed _____ and confirm the **onset** of circulatory arrest by evidence of the following: Name of Patient

- Absence of palpable pulse and pulse pressure as monitored by arterial line.
OR
 - Absence of apical heart sounds and pulse with confirmation of asystole via electrocardiogram monitoring
- AND
- Absence of spontaneous respirations
and
 - No response to periodic noxious stimuli.

Date/Time of **onset** of circulatory arrest _____ (beginning observation period)

Physician name: _____ Signature: _____

Section 2 – Determination of Circulatory Death

By signing below, I confirm there has been a **minimum** 5-minute observation period beginning with the onset of circulatory arrest during which the following has been observed:

- Continuous absence of palpable pulse and pulse pressure as monitored by arterial line.
OR
 - Continuous absence of apical heart sounds and pulse with confirmation of asystole via electrocardiogram monitoring
- AND
- No evidence of spontaneous respirations
and
 - No pupillary response
and
 - No response to periodic noxious stimuli.

I pronounce the above named patient to be dead according to circulatory criteria.

1st Physician Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

I **confirm** the death of the above named patient

2nd Physician Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

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LEGAL TIME OF DEATH



The following guidelines for the determination of death for the purposes of post mortem donation have been adapted from the National Recommendations for Donation after Circulatory Death in Canada published in October 2006 (CMAJ 175(8) 2006).

Death and the Minimum Criteria to Proceed with Organ Donation

a) **Determination of fact of death** - By law, for the purposes of a post-mortem transplant and as it applies to Donation after Circulatory Death (DCD), the fact of death shall be determined by (2) two fully licensed physicians in accordance with "accepted medical practice." Physicians must be physically present to determine death.

b) **Conflict of interest** - No physician who has had any association with a proposed transplant recipient that might influence their judgment shall take any part in the determination of death of the donor.

c) **Prohibition on participation in transplant** - No physician who took any part in the determination of the fact of death of the donor shall participate in any way in transplant procedures.

d) **Determination of circulatory death** - This forum only defined accepted medical practice for the determination of death for the purposes of organ donation in the context of DCD. For the purposes of DCD, we recommend that the following criteria be met before organ procurement:

- Beginning with the onset of circulatory arrest, there must be a 5-minute period during which the absence of palpable pulse, blood pressure and respiration are continuously observed by at least 1 fully licensed physician

and

- Death is determined by 2 fully licensed physicians by documenting the absence of palpable pulse, blood pressure and respiration on completion of this 5-minute period.

The physician present during the 5-minute period of continuous observation and who makes 1 of the determinations of death must be a fully licensed physician with the requisite skill and training. Monitoring to establish the fact of death is the priority during this period of observation. There must be no interventions to facilitate donation during this period.

Key considerations

- For the purposes of DCD, both of the physicians determining death must be physicians with full and current licensure for independent medical practice by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C.
- The legal time of death is the determination after a 5-minute observation period.
- The purpose of the 5-minute observation period is to confirm the irreversibility of cardiocirculatory arrest before organ procurement.
- Blood pressure is defined as an arterial pressure that generates anterograde circulation. The preferred method to confirm the absence of blood pressure is by arterial line monitoring.