

# Confirmation of Death by Circulatory Criteria (DCC)



ADDRESSOGRAPH/PATIENT LABEL

For the purposes of post-mortem donation, **the fact of death shall be determined by two persons, each of whom must be a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner** in accordance with accepted practice. No healthcare practitioner who has had any association with the proposed recipient that might influence the practitioner's judgment shall take any part in the determination of death of the donor. No healthcare practitioner who took any part in the determination 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  $\leq 5$  mm Hg 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

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

Verifying Practitioner name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2 – Determination of Death by Circulatory Criteria (DCC)

By signing below, I confirm there has been a **minimum** 5-minute observation period without moving the patient 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

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

1<sup>st</sup> Medical/Nurse Practitioner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

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

2<sup>nd</sup> Medical/Nurse Practitioner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

LEGAL TIME OF DEATH

BC Transplant, #260 - 1770 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 4Y6  
Phone (604) 877-2240 (24 hours a day)



The following guidelines for the determination of death for the purposes of post-mortem donation have been adapted from: [A brain-based definition of death and criteria for its determination after arrest of circulation or neurologic function in Canada: a 2023 clinical practice guideline](#). Shemie SD, Wilson LC, Hornby L, et al. *physician* doi: 10.1007/s12630-023-02431-4. Epub 2023 May 2. PMID: 37131020

## **Death and the Minimum Criteria to Proceed with Organ Donation**

**Determination of fact of death** – By law, for the purposes of a post-mortem transplant and as it applies to Donation after Death by Circulatory Criteria (DCC), the fact of death shall be determined by two (2) persons, each of whom must be a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner in accordance with accepted practice.

**Conflict of interest** – No healthcare practitioner 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.

**Prohibition on participation in transplant** – No healthcare practitioner who took any part in the determination of the fact of death of the donor shall participate in any way in transplant procedures.

**Determination of Death by Circulatory Criteria** – These guidelines defined accepted practice for the determination of death for the purposes of organ donation in the context of DCC. For the purposes of DCC, 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 patient is not moved and the absence of palpable pulse, blood pressure and respiration are continuously observed by at least 1 medical practitioner or nurse practitioner
- and**
- Death is determined by 2 fully licensed medical/nurse practitioners by documenting the absence of palpable pulse, blood pressure and respiration on completion of this 5-minute period.

The medical/nurse practitioner present during the 5-minute period of continuous observation and who makes one of the determinations of death must be a fully licensed practitioner 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 DCC, both of the practitioners must be a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner fully licensed for independent practice.
- 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  $\geq 5$ mm Hg. The preferred method to confirm the absence of blood pressure is by arterial line monitoring.