



May 30, 2014

Dear Coroners, Medical Examiners, Pathologists, Investigators, Law Enforcement Officials, and Medical Professionals:

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), in partnership with the Minnesota Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Association (MC&MEA), and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), have decided to replace the 2002 Minnesota Infant Death Investigation Guidelines with the Sudden and Unexplained Infant Death Investigation Reporting Forms (SUIDIRF). The SUIDIRF is a death scene investigation tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to standardize death scene investigations of sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUIDS) in states and local jurisdictions.

The decision to replace the Minnesota Infant Death Investigation Guidelines was made in 2013 when an interdisciplinary committee of medical examiners, investigators, and law enforcement officials from around the state convened to evaluate the effectiveness of the Minnesota guidelines. After reviewing data on the causes of infant deaths and debating the relative advantages of the SUIDIRF and the Minnesota guidelines, the committee voted unanimously to replace the Minnesota guidelines with the SUIDIRF. The committee cited a critical need for better documentation, reporting, and classification of the causes and manner of sudden and unexpected infant deaths, as well as a need to improve surveillance, research, and evaluation of existing efforts to prevent future infant deaths, as the primary reasons for its decision.

Minnesota Statute 145.898 authorizes the Minnesota Department of Health to "develop uniform investigative guidelines and protocols for coroners and medical examiners conducting death investigations and autopsies of children under two years of age." The deadline for implementing this change in death scene investigation protocol is September 1, 2014. By this date, all persons involved with conducting death scene investigations are expected to use this form, filling out appropriate sections completely. Systematic completion of forms will provide data that will aid in ascertaining cause and manner of death, as well as provide communities with a means to improve responses in cases of SUID deaths and, perhaps more importantly, develop appropriate preventive measures.

The BCA has developed a web page under the "Criminal Justice Training & Education" portion of its website, which provides downloadable versions of the form, and links to training documents and other supporting materials. To access the website, please visit: <https://cjte.x.state.mn.us/ei/cm.esp?id=3&pageid=41N0UKJMV>. Information about the SUIDIRF and SUIDS are also available on the CDC's website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/sids/SUIDRFdownload.htm>. Please feel free to contact Michelle Chiezah, Infant Mortality Consultant, MDH, at 651-201-3621 or Michelle.Chiezah@state.mn.us, if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your partnership with us across state and local government in implementing this national standard.

Sincerely,

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Sincerely,

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