

# Cause of Death: Cancer

Correct cancer reporting on death records is critical for public health, research, and legal accuracy. These records serve as the primary data source for national mortality statistics. Accurate information allows health agencies to track cancer trends, identify emerging epidemics, and monitor the effectiveness of screening and prevention programs.

## Required items for cause of death:

Specific items must be included when entering cancer as a cause of death on the Cause of Death page. Required items are:

- Primary site of the cancer, or secondary site if primary is unknown
- Cell type (if known)
- Grade of the neoplasm (e.g., Low-grade, Grade2, Undifferentiated)
- Part (or lobe) of the affected organ

If the primary site of the cancer is unknown, please state that it is unknown. You may use whatever phrasing you prefer such as “of unknown origin” or “source unknown.” For example: Metastatic Adenocarcinoma of unknown origin with secondary sites of brain and lung.

## Soft edit error message:

You will always receive a soft edit error message when entering cancer as a cause of death. Verify that the cause of death lists all required elements (above) and then override the error and save override. [Information about overriding an error \(soft/yellow edit\) \(pdf\)](#) can be found on the [Vital Records Website](#).

Validation Results				List All Errors	Save Overrides	Hide
Error Message	Override	Goto Field	Popup			
DR_3006: Check your entry of the Cancer related information on Line A. Always specify the Primary Site of the Cancer. List the Primary Site or that the Primary Site is Unknown. When you specify that the Primary Site is Unknown, also specify the Secondary Sites. "Suspected" or "Probable" are acceptable where needed. List the Type and Grade of Cancer, if known. When the entry is complete, override this error message and save your override. The yellow highlighting will not clear after you have made your correction, but you can still move forward.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

## Examples that include required information:

### Case 1:

Neuroendocrine Tumor, primary site unknown, High Grade 3, Metastatic to Liver and Bone

### Case 2:

Melanoma of the Back, metastatic to Brain and Lungs

### Case 3:

Metastatic adenocarcinoma of the prostate

### Case 4:

Primary well-differentiated squamous cell carcinoma, lung, left upper lobe

[Visit https://bit.ly/orvrMEDCERT \(web page\)](https://bit.ly/orvrMEDCERT) for additional cause-of-death resources.