



College of Respiratory  
Therapists of Ontario

Ordre des thérapeutes  
respiratoires de l'Ontario

# PRONOUNCING DEATH

Practice FAQs

APRIL 2022

## QUESTION

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Can a Respiratory Therapist pronounce death within our hospital?

## ANSWER

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There is no legal requirement that death be pronounced by a physician, and there is nothing in legislation that would prevent an RT from pronouncing death, as this is, simply put, identifying a lack of vital signs. Considered public domain, this does not fall under a controlled act, so RT's may perform. It is important to note that RT's can not **certify** death (signing a Medical Certificate of Death), under the [Vital Statistics Act](#). Certifying a death is the legal process of attesting to the fact, cause, and manner of someone's death, in writing, on the form prescribed by the local authority. Each province and territory has legislation governing who can certify a death.

As always, RT's must follow their facility's policies and protocols with respect to this subject.