

# NCIS Coding Tips

## May 2017

### Frequently Asked Questions and Coding Tips

#### When do I use an exact Date/Time and the between Dates/Times?

When deciding whether to use an exact Date/Time or the between Dates/Times, use the following as a guide:

- If the event (incident or death) was witnessed – code an exact Date/Time.
- If the event (incident or death) was **not** witnessed – code the between Dates/Times, based on the interval between when the deceased was last known to be alive and when the body was found.

Errors relating to the use of an exact Date/Time for **Intentional Self-Harm cases** are commonly identified during the QA process.

Although some acts of self-harm may be witnessed and involve mechanisms that allow little time for preventative action to be taken by a witness, such as a gunshot, motor vehicle incident, stabbing and self-immolation, a substantial number of suicides occur in private or secluded locations where there are no witnesses. Cases that involve a hanging, drug overdose or carbon monoxide poisoning regularly require the coding of a range of Dates/Times.

#### What location code should I use for a drowning death?

When the incident or death occurs in water, such as a 'drowning', the location **must** be coded as the water source.

Commonly used water source codes include:

- Countryside
  - Area of Still Water (includes: farm dams, ponds, puddle of water)
  - Stream of Water (includes: river, creek, stream, canal, flooded area)
  - Large Area of Water (includes: lake, sea, ocean, bay, public dam, reservoir, estuary)
- Sports and Athletics Area
  - Public Swimming Centre

If the water source is part of a larger entity, such as a backyard pool at home, then the location should describe the larger entity, such as a Detached House. This rule should be applied when coding the location for all cases.

**DO NOT** use the code "Beach, Shore, Bank of a Body of Water" to describe the water source for a drowning.

This code refers to the land **parallel** to the water, such as a riverbank, shore of ocean or beach.

Note: The use of "Beach, Shore, Bank of a Body of Water" for the Death location is correct if the person was alive when removed from the water source or resuscitation was commenced, and the death occurred on the land.

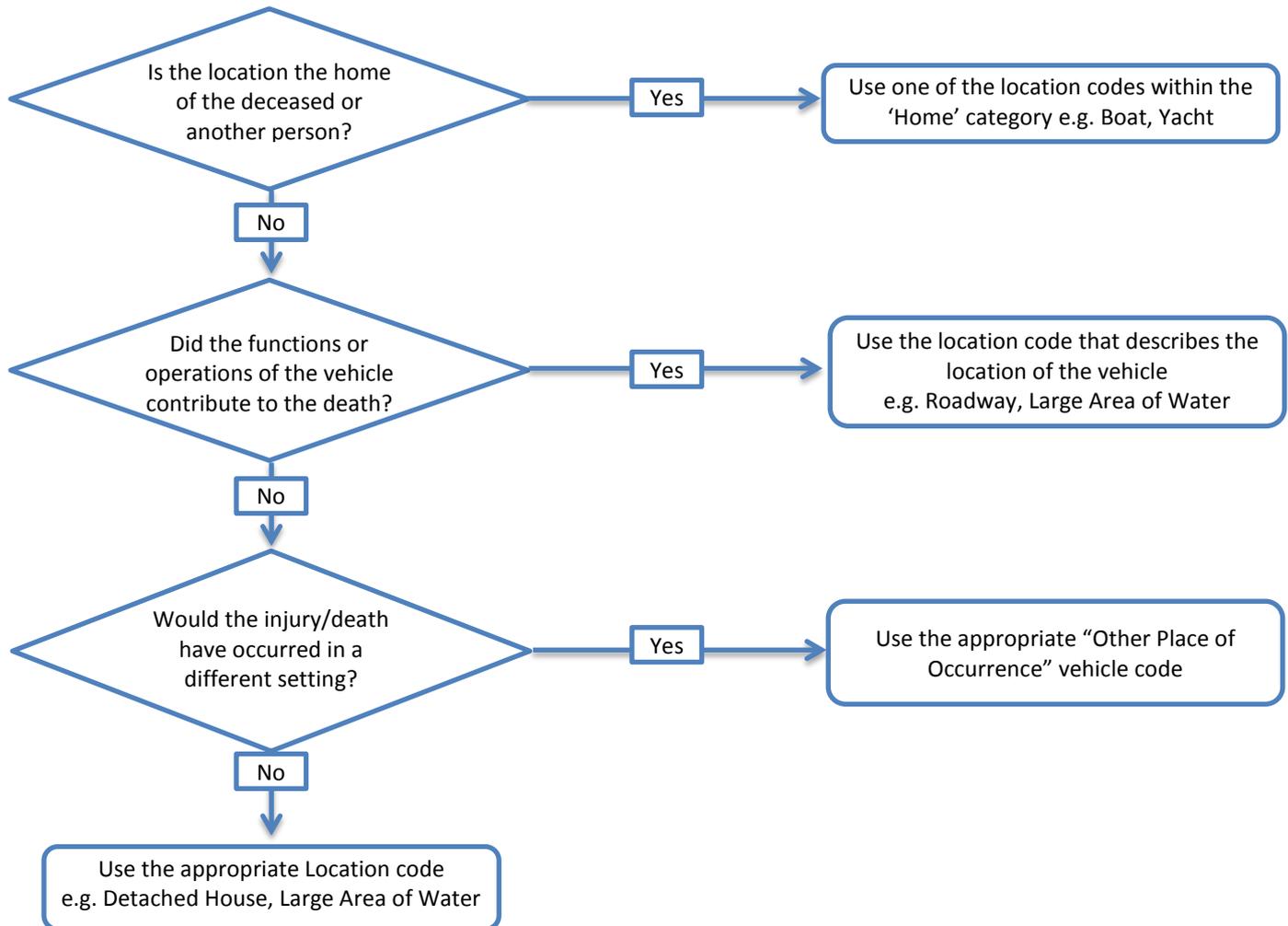
## When do I use the Location code “Other Place of Occurrence”?

The following codes can be found under “Other Place of Occurrence”:

- Aircraft
- Watercraft
- Land Vehicle

In some cases, more than one location code may describe where the incident or death occurred. The flowchart below should be used as a guide when deciding which location code is most appropriate.

### Tips on using the “Other Place of Occurrence” codes



### Coding Examples

- Deceased choked whilst eating dinner on a boat at sea – Code as ‘Watercraft’.  
If the deceased had been eating in a restaurant, the location would be coded as ‘Café, Pub, Restaurant’.
- Deceased died whilst sleeping on a plane during a flight – Code as ‘Aircraft’.  
If the deceased has been in bed at home, the location would be coded as ‘Detached House’.
- Deceased died from carbon monoxide poisoning using a petrol generator in a 4WD – Code as ‘Land Vehicle’.  
The vehicle is being used as an enclosed space and should therefore be coded as the location. If the deceased had placed the generator in a home garage, the location would be coded as ‘Detached House’.

## **What Case Type and Intent code should I use for SUDI/SIDS/Sudden Infant Death/Fatal Sleeping Accidents in Infancy?**

The term Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) is used to describe the unexpected death of an infant, for which there is no obvious pathological or clinical reason. The term incorporates three components:

1. SIDS – Sudden Infant Death Syndrome - no identifiable cause of death can be found
2. Fatal Sleep Accidents - result of sleeping environment i.e. overlay, wedging
3. Other Deaths - medical conditions undiagnosed until coronial investigation

The coding of these cases is dependent on the cause of death as determined by the coroner and pathologist.

The following coding guidelines should be applied to any relevant cases.

### **SUDI/SIDS:**

The fact that the cause of death is unknown or unexplained at the completion of the coronial investigation should be reflected in the Case Type and Intent coding. It is not accurate to code the death as Natural or External, thus the correct coding for these cases is:

Case Type: Unlikely To Be Known

Intent: Unlikely To Be Known

### **Fatal Sleep Accidents (Includes: Unintentional Suffocation)**

Where the cause of death has been attributed to an external factor such as the bedding (mattress, pillow, blankets etc.) or co-sleeping with another person, the death should be coded as due to External Causes:

Case Type: Death due to External Cause(s)

Intent: Unintentional

### **Other Deaths**

Where the cause of death has been attributed to a pre-existing medical condition and this condition is documented as a cause of death by the coroner, the death should be coded as due to Natural Causes.

Case Type: Death due to Natural Cause(s)

Intent: -

## **Update: Alcohol/Drugs Coding Tips Newsletter – Released March 2017**

Thanks to all the coders who have commenced applying the guidelines included in the Alcohol/Drugs Coding Tips Newsletter and to those who have provided feedback to the team.

We would like to advise all coders that we are currently reviewing the information and guidelines provided within the newsletter in order to provide some further clarification to the guidelines (particularly Flowchart 1).

A revised Alcohol/Drugs Coding Tips Newsletter will be released shortly – stay tuned.

# Enhancements to the NCIS

On 13 June 2017, the NCIS web interface will be upgraded and feature a number of new functions, some of which include:

- The ability to re-open cases;
- A new search tool;
- The removal of the FDV field; and
- The extension of the Screen Timeout period



## Re-opening Cases

All NSW and VIC coders will be able to re-open cases via a new button on the Case Details screen.

### How Does It Work?

If you have edit permissions (i.e. the ability to code and close cases via the interface) a “Re-Open” button will be displayed on the bottom of the Case Detail screen, this will allow you to re-open a case to update or add information and upload documents.

However, cases which have been flagged for QA Review cannot be re-opened by coders – if you need to re-open a case where the “Re-Open” button does not appear, please contact the NCIS QA Team.

## “Jump To” Search Bar

The “Jump To” tool allows you to navigate immediately to the Case Details screen of a case and removes the need to use the three separate data fields on the Find Case screen (Case State, Case Year and Case Sequence).

### How Does It Work?

- The “Jump To” field is located at the bottom of the screen.
- Enter the NCIS number which is an amalgamation of the “Jurisdiction”, “Year” and “Sequence” fields and select “GO”
- Several case number formats can be used for the “Jump To” field. Let’s use **NSW** case **1111** of **2017** as an example:
  1. Jurisdiction.Year.Sequence                      NSW.2017.1111
  2. Jurisdiction Code.Year.Sequence                1.2017.1111
  3. Jurisdiction CodeYearSequence                120171111

Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction Code	Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction Code	Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction Code
NSW	1	SA	4	NT	7
VIC	2	WA	5	ACT	8
QLD	3	TAS	6	NZ	9

## FDV Related Death Field

The “FDV Related” data field was implemented as part of the Family and Domestic Violence initiatives in July 2014. This field will be removed from the NCIS interface until there is national consensus as to the definition of family and domestic violence and the code can be consistently applied to cases.

Please Note: The removal of the “FDV Related” field does not affect the requirement to complete the “Perpetrator Relationship to Deceased” field for all Assault cases.

## Screen Timeout Period

The screen Timeout period will be extended to 45 minutes. This is an extension of the timeout function by 15 minutes and was implemented in recognition that sometimes it can take longer to code a screen.

# NCIS Quality Assurance Reviews: Increased Activity

In October 2016, the NCIS Quality Assurance Team commenced a project to reduce the number of closed cases awaiting quality review on the NCIS.

At the beginning of the project, a QA 'backlog' of 29 months' worth of data was waiting to be reviewed by the QA team. Utilising the additional resources available during the project, the QA Team was able to reduce the QA backlog to 21 months.

Given the success of the first phase of the project, a second phase of the project for an additional 12 month period has been endorsed. The NCIS QA team expects a further substantial reduction of the backlog at the completion of project.

## Coder Training

The NCIS continues to provide training to coders online and face-to-face.

A number of comprehensive training modules are available on our website to consolidate your coding knowledge. These can be accessed at any time and are intended to supplement the face-to-face training conducted in each jurisdiction.

<http://www.ncis.org.au/data-quality/ncis-coder-online-training/>

Any jurisdiction that requires training for new or returning NCIS coders should contact the NCIS Unit to enquire about holding a training session in your jurisdiction.

## Feedback

Any feedback or queries regarding the NCIS interface can be directed to me via email at [Leanne.daking@ncis.org.au](mailto:Leanne.daking@ncis.org.au) or by telephone on (03) 9684 4458.

Thank You

*Leanne*