

# Death in Custody Reporting Act (DCRA)

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WHAT AND HOW TO REPORT TO THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC SAFETY (DPS)

# DCRA Purpose

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In December 2014, Congress enacted the Death in Custody Act of 2023 (DCRA). DCRA requires states and federal law enforcement agencies to report to the U.S. Department of Justice information regarding the death of any person who is (1) detained by law enforcement; (2) under arrest; (3) in the process of being arrested; (4) en route to being incarcerated or detained; or (5) incarcerated at any correctional facility, including contact facilities. Collectively, all five of these circumstances are referred to as “deaths in custody”.

# DCRA MO DPS Website

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The Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS) has a Death in Custody Reporting Act (DCRA) website: [Missouri Department of Public Safety | Death in Custody Reporting Act - DCRA \(mo.gov\)](https://www.missouri.gov/DCRA)

The website includes links for:

- DCRA template
- DCRA FAQs

# DCRA Template

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The DCRA template must be completed and submitted to DPS

- Email: [dpscile@dps.mo.gov](mailto:dpscile@dps.mo.gov)
- Fax: (573) 522-1908

Reports can be submitted

- As soon as the death occurs
- Quarterly
  - January 10
  - April 10
  - July 10
  - October 10

# DCRA Template, Question #2

## Question #2

- A. List the decedent **Last, First** and **Middle** name
- B. Select the **Gender** of the decedent
- C. Select the **Race** of the decedent
- D. Select the **Ethnicity** of the decedent
- E: List the **Birth Year (YYYY)** format for the decedent, if unknown list (9999)

**2. Please provide the following decedent information.**  
*NOTE: Submit a form per incident if you have multiple deaths in custody.*

**A. Name:**  
**Last Name:**   
**First Name:**   
**Middle Name:**

**B. Gender:**  
 Male  
 Female  
 Other gender identity

**C. Race:** *(Select all that apply)*  
 American Indian or Alaska Native  
 Asian  
 Black or African American  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 White  
 Unknown

**D. Ethnicity:**  
 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin  
 Not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin  
 Unknown

**E. Birth Year (YYYY):** *(If unknown, enter 9999.)*

# DCRA Template, Question #3

## Question #3

- A. List the **Date of Death (MM-DD-YYYY)** format for the decedent
- B. List the **Time of Death (24-Hour Clock)** format for the decedent
- C. List the **Location of Death**
  - 1. **Location Name:** (i.e., name of a facility, place of business, or any other designation for the location)
    - This is the location that the decedent dies, not the location of the event leading to the death
  - 2. **Street Address**
  - 3. **City**
  - 4. **State** (postal abbreviation)
  - 5. **Zip**

3. Please list the following information regarding the decedent's death.

A. **Date of Death:** (MM-DD-YYYY)  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. **Time of Death:** (24-Hour Clock)  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. **Location of Death:**

1. **Location Name:** (If applicable.) (This could be the name of a facility, place of business, or other designation for the location of death.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Street Address:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **City:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. **State (postal abbreviation):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Zip:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

# DCRA Template, Question #3, cont.

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## Question #3, cont.

- D. Select the type of facility that the decedent died in
  - If the type of facility or if the death did not occur in a facility, select “None of the Above”

**D. If the event causing the death occurred in any of the following facilities, please indicate the appropriate facility below. If the event causing the death did not occur in one of the facilities listed below, please use the “None of the above” answer choice.**

- Municipal or county jail
- State prison
- State-run boot camp prison
- Contracted boot camp prison
- Any state or local contract facility
- Other local or state correctional facility (to include any juvenile facilities)
- None of the above

# DCRA Template, Question #4

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## Question #4

- A. List the name of the department or agency that detained, arrested, or was in the process of arresting the deceased

**4. Please list the name of the department or agency that detained, arrested, or was in the process of arresting the deceased.**

**A. Agency Name:**



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# DCRA Template, Question #5

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## Question #5

- Select the manner of death (only select one)

**5. Please indicate the manner of death.** *(Mark only one.)*

- Execution
- Accident
- Death attributed to use of force by a law enforcement or corrections officer
- Homicide (e.g. an incident between two or more incarcerated individuals resulting in a death)
- Natural causes
- Suicide
- Unavailable, investigation pending

If unavailable, investigation pending, please report the agency conducting the investigation and an approximate end date.

**Agency:**

**Approximate End Date:**

*NOTE: When the investigation has concluded, an amended report identifying the manner of death must be submitted to the Missouri Department of Public Safety so the federal report can be amended.*

- Other

# DCRA Template, Question #5, cont.

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## Question #5, cont.

- If you select “Unavailable, investigation pending”, additional information is required
  - List the Agency that is performing the investigation
  - List the Approximate End Date of the investigation
    - Once the investigation is completed and an official cause of death has been determined, the original DCRA report should be updated and resent to DPS
- If you selected “Other”, additional information is required
  - “Other” should be selected if the cause of death is deemed to be undetermined and/or the following:
    - COVID-19
    - Drug Overdose
    - Deaths that resulted from car accidents with no police involvement
    - Deaths of police officers or correctional officers
    - Death occurring to individuals under supervision (e.g. halfway houses) who dies while outside the confines of their location of custody

# Example Scenarios

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## Accident

- Includes but not limited to: car accident occurring during police pursuit, but not due to police intervention (such as PIT maneuver)

## Use of Force by Law Enforcement

- Includes but not limited to: death results from officer deployment of gun or taser, restraint, physical altercations, PIT maneuver or TIV

## Natural Causes

- Includes but not limited to: decedent is arrested without incident (no taser, physical altercation, etc.) but suffers a heart attack while in transport to the law enforcement station

## Suicide

- Includes but not limited to: decedent uses their own weapon to commit suicide after law enforcement presence has been established

# Example Scenarios, cont.

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## Unavailable, Investigation Pending

- Incident remains under investigation

## Other – Overdose

- Includes but not limited to: decedent swallows a baggie during a traffic stop, begins convulsing, and later dies due to fentanyl toxicity

# Question #5, DPS follow-up

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If you select, “Unavailable, Investigation Pending”

- You will be required to resubmit your original report, but updated with the official cause of death
  - DPS will send quarterly reminders for any updates, if you have not sent it

If the initial cause of death has been changed

- You will be required to resubmit your original report, but updated with the official cause of death

**It is important that when the report is initially submitted to DPS that contact information for the individual responsible for the report is included**

# DCRA Template, Question #6

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## Question #6

- Provide a brief description of the circumstances leading to the death, including but not limited to:
  - Details surrounding an event that may have led to the death
  - Number and affiliation of any parties involved in an incident
  - The location and characteristics of an incident
  - Other context related to the death

**6. Please provide a brief description of the circumstances leading to the death (e.g. details surrounding an event that may have led to the death, the number and affiliation of any parties involved in an incident, the location and characteristics of an incident, other context related to the death, etc.).** *(maximum of 5000 characters)*

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide a description of the circumstances leading to the death. There is a small grey rectangular mark in the top-left corner of the box.

# DCRA Template, Question #6, cont.

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## How to write a brief circumstances

- When completing the Death in Custody Reporting Act Reporting Template for submission to the Missouri Department of Public Safety, the brief description of circumstance should include the following details:
  - **Who:** provide the number of individuals involved in any altercations preceding death (e.g., number of inmates or law enforcement officers on scene)
  - **What:** provide a more specific manner of death (e.g., end-stage liver disease, stab wounds from an altercation, asphyxiation due to being placed in a prone position while restrained)**When:** provide a general time of day that the death occurred (e.g., morning, afternoon, evening, overnight)
  - **Where:** provide the location of the decedent (e.g., jail cell, scene of arrest, medical facility)
  - **Why:** for deaths occurring due to use of force by law enforcement, include why initial contact was made with the decedent, whether he or she was armed or resisting arrest, etc.
- While all brief circumstances should provide the details outlined above, they will look different across manners and locations of death.

# DCRA Template, Question #6, cont.

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Circumstances and example descriptions:

## Accident

- Insufficient Description: Accidental Death While in Custody
- Sufficient Description: John Doe fell from the top bunk in Pod-E, Cell 14 on 01/01/24 and suffered a neck fracture. He was taken to the Medical Unit for treatment and observation. However, his health began to rapidly decline. He was pronounced dead at 1:05 a.m. on 01/03/24.

## Death Attributed to Used of Force by a Law Enforcement or Corrections Officer

- Insufficient Description: Restraint
- Sufficient Description: Jane Doe, housed in the Allegheny County Jail, was being transferred from Pod-A to Pod-D when she became agitated and resisted commands. She was then assaulted by Corrections Officers and forced into the prone position where she became unresponsive. Officer's initiated CPR. However, she expired on scene.



# DCRA Template, Question #6, cont.

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Circumstances and example descriptions, cont.:

## Execution

- Insufficient Description: Execution
- Sufficient Description: John Doe was executed by lethal injection on 01/02/24 as ordered by the Missouri Courts.

## Homicide

- Insufficient Description: Altercation in Prison
- Sufficient Description: On 03/15/24, a fight occurred between John Doe and another inmate in the Ocean County Jail. The inmate punched John Doe several times in the head. During transport to the Green Valley Hospital, John Doe flatlined.

# DCRA Template, Question #6, cont.

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Circumstances and example descriptions, cont.:

## Natural Causes

- Insufficient Description: Prolonged Illness
- Sufficient Description: 86-year old Jane Doe was found unresponsive in her cell on 03/15/24 at approximately 8:30 a.m. Medical personnel attempted CPR but were unsuccessful and declared Jane Doe dead at the scene. Jane Doe had a history of atherosclerotic and hypertensive heart disease.

## Other

- Insufficient Description: Overdose
- Sufficient Description: On 03/12/2024 at 5:20 p.m., John Doe was found having a medical emergency. Officers notified on-site medical personnel who quickly responded to the scene and began life saving measures, performing CPR, and applying an AED. John Doe was transported to the local hospital but expired at 7:59 p.m. Autopsy reports list the cause of death as respiratory complications of COVID-19 with contributing factors of pulmonary calcifications and hypertensive cardiovascular disease.

# DCRA Template, Question #6, cont.

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## Do:

- Describe the death in as much detail as possible, including:
  - Why initial contact was made with the decedent
  - Whether the decedent was armed
  - Whether the decedent was resisting arrest
  - Whether life-saving measures were administered
- Provide enough information that it is clear the death is reportable under DCRA
- Clarify whether the death occurred during the process arrest or while the decedent was in custody
- If circumstances are unknown, provide a timeline for when you estimate receiving that information

# DCRA Template, Question #6, cont.

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Don't:

- Only write one or two word description
- Leave the Narrative blank
- Write “unknown” or “N/A”

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1. How do we report COVID-19 related deaths?

- Select “Other” on Question #5, and list “COVID-19” in the box provided

2. How do we report overdose deaths?

- Select “Other” on Question #5, and list “Drug Overdose” in the box provided

3. The medical examiner ruled the death as “homicide”, but the death happened during the process of arrest, how do we report this?

- Deaths that are occurred during the process of an arrest from use of force (e.g. use of a weapon, restraint, tactical vehicle intervention (TVI) or precision immobilization technique (PIT) maneuver) should be marked as “Death attributed to use of force by a law enforcement or corrections officer” on Question #5

# Reportable vs Nonreportable Scenarios

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Police officers pursue an individual, during which the suspect produces a weapon threatening officer safety. The suspect is then shot and killed by the officers without an officer having “put hands on the suspect” to physically attempt an arrest prior to the shooting.

- YES, this is reportable, as the deceased was in the process of being arrested

Police contact (e.g., a brief detention such as traffic stop, questioning an individual who matches a suspect description) results in an individual being delayed from going about their intended business. The individual then has a medical emergency and dies.

- YES, this is reportable, as the deceased was detained

If an inmate is transferred to a medical facility and dies there, not in a correctional facility, is that reportable?

- YES, if the incarcerated person, absent the medical condition, would have been in prison at the time of death, it counts as a reportable death. Although the person was not physically in a correctional facility at the time of death, the death is still one of an incarcerated individual

# Reportable vs Nonreportable Scenarios, cont.

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Are deaths of individuals who are being monitored by GPS tracking devices reportable?

- NO, these are not reportable. Being the individual is not being detained, under arrest, in the process of being arrested, en route to be incarcerated, or is incarcerated, this is not report

Are death that occur to bystanders during law enforcement pursuit considered reportable?

- NO, these are not reportable. Since the deceased individual are not being detained, under arrest, in the process of being arrested, in route to be incarcerated, or are incarcerated

Is a decedent's overdose death, that occurred before an officer arrives on scene reportable?

- NO, these are not reportable. Being the individual was not being detained or in the process of arrest

# Reportable vs Nonreportable Scenarios, cont.

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The following scenarios where a decedent commits suicide while being detained by law enforcement officers:

- Response is for a person with a mental disturbance or a distraught person where the result of police custody would have been to transport them for a mental health evaluation prior to determining any criminal charges
  - YES, this is reportable because the deceased was being detained
- Response is for a person who is suspect in a crime, or a person wanted for questioning, whether an arrest warrant has been issued or not
  - YES, this is reportable because the deceased was being detained



# Reportable vs Nonreportable Scenarios, cont.

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The following are scenarios where a death occurred during a police pursuit of an individual suspected of a crime

- Suspect crashes and dies as a result of engaging in an active vehicle pursuit with law enforcement
  - YES, this is reportable
- Crashed and dies although officers terminated the pursuit for safety reasons and no police vehicles were obviously in pursuit
  - NO, this is not reportable

The following are scenarios where an overdose death occurred

- An individual is overdosing in the parking lot of an apartment complex; a neighbor calls the police who then arrive on scene alongside EMS. Before the officers interact with the individual, they die
  - NO, this is not reportable, as the individual was not being detained, under arrest, or in the process of being arrested
- An individual is acting erratically in the parking lot of an apartment complex; a neighbor calls the police, who arrive on scene and place the individual under arrest. While being handcuffed, the individual goes into cardiac arrest and is unable to be revived. The cause of death is later determined to be fentanyl toxicity
  - YES, this is reportable as the individual was in the process of being arrested

# Reportable vs Nonreportable Scenarios, cont.

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Are deaths occurring in halfway houses included?

Deaths occurring in a halfway house are included if the halfway house is under contract with the state or local government. A death occurring in a private halfway house that is not under contract with state or local government is not reportable.

- An individual is released from prison but required to serve the remainder of their sentence in a Residential Reentry Center (RRC) under contract with the state, They later dies while at the RRC.
  - YES, this is reportable
- An individual is released from prison and elects to live in a sober living house post-release. They later die while at the sober living house.
  - NO, this is not reportable

# Non-Reportable Deaths

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## Examples of non-reportable deaths

- Deaths resulting from car accidents with no police involvement
- Deaths of police or correctional officers
- Deaths occurring to individuals under supervision (e.g., in halfway houses) who die while outside the confines of their location

# Deaths Occurring During Arrest

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For deaths occurring during the process of an arrest – Arrest-Related Deaths (ARDs) – the Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS) requests additional details be provided in the brief circumstances, including

- Why initial contact was made with the decedent
- If the decedent was armed
- If the decedent was resisting arrest
- If lifesaving measures were administered

NOTE: Manner of death “Execution” and “Homicide” are never used for arrest-related deaths

- Homicide is only used resulting from an altercation between two or more incarcerated individuals

# Deaths Occurring During Arrest, cont.

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## Deaths occurring during arrest scenarios

- Accident
  - Insufficient Description: Motor vehicle pursuit
  - Sufficient Description: On 01/30/2024 at approximately 7:15 p.m., two Lake County Sheriff Department squad cars began pursuing a stole 2019 BMW X5. Additional units were called in to set up a perimeter. The driver increased his speed to over 120 mph and crashed into a median. The driver and front seat passenger were both ejected from the vehicle. The front seat passenger sustained serious injuries and the driver was declared dead at the scene.
- Death Attributed to Use of Force by a law enforcement or correctional officer
  - Insufficient Description: Taser
  - Sufficient Description: On 02/01/2024 at approximately 11:30 a.m., Santa Fe Police attempted to arrest John Doe for a parole violation when he became aggressive with officers and started wielding a bat. The officers verbally advised John Doe to drop the bat, or they would deploy their taser. John Doe then dropped the bat and pulled out a knife from his back pocket and charged at an officer. Another officer deployed their service weapon hitting John Doe twice in the abdomen. EMS responded. However, John Doe died on scene.

# Deaths Occurring During Arrest, cont.

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## Deaths occurring during arrest scenarios, cont.

- Natural Causes
  - Insufficient Description: Natural death in law enforcement custody
  - Sufficient Description: On 02/14/2024, Jane Doe was arrested by the Polk County Sheriff's Office for aggravated assault after she attempted to stab another individual with a piece of broken glass. It was reported Jane Doe and the individual got into a heated argument, which then turned into a physical altercation. Jane Doe initially resisted arrest, fleeing on foot by which a deputy K9 was dispatched. She was taken to Winter Haven Hospital for treatment and suffered from a heart attack. Medical records show Jane Doe had a history of chest pains and shortness of breath. Jane Doe was pronounced dead at 1:22 p.m.
- Suicide
  - Insufficient Description: Gunshot wound to the head
  - Sufficient Description: On 03/01/2024 at 11:00 a.m., Jane Doe contacted New York City Police dispatch to report husband John Doe, whom she has an active order of protection against, was threatening her with a gun. Two NYPD units were sent to respond to the scene. Officers gave John Doe multiple verbal commands to drop the gun. John Doe shot himself in the head. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

# Deaths Occurring During Arrest, cont.

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## Deaths occurring during arrest scenarios, cont.

- Other
  - Insufficient Description: Overdose
  - Sufficient Description: On 02/22/2024 at approximately 9:15 a.m., John Doe was arrested by the Kansas City Police Department for possession and intent to sell methamphetamine. While being processed at the Johnson County Jail, John Doe suffered heart failure. CPR was started and staff radioed for medical personnel. However, he expired at 12:30 p.m. Autopsy and toxicology reports show that John Doe had elevated levels of methamphetamine in his system.