



## **Toronto's Reporting Form for The registry for the death of people who are homeless**

January 1, 2017

TDIN members, along with many organizations and the City, are concerned that the deaths of people who are homeless have not been accurately reported, investigated or acted on.

As a result, starting January 1, 2017, Toronto Public Health has created an on-line form to track the deaths of people who are homeless, which will then be checked with the Coroner's Office. Toronto Public Health's message follows the instructions, with contact information at the bottom.

### **How to Report a Death of a Person is homeless in Toronto:**

1. Confirm the person is homeless by the definition below (without permanent suitable housing)
2. Go to the website <https://tph.fluidsurveys.com/s/homelessdeathreport/> and enter password TPHHD2017 in all capitals.
3. Fill in the information requested. Please go over the questions with whoever is reporting the death. Be detailed as possible.
4. All information will be kept confidential. Provide as much identifying information, and don't worry about duplicate reports.

### **Toronto Public Health Info:**

**Defining Homelessness:** As a general rule, the definition of "homelessness" used for this project is that established by the Canadian Homelessness Research Network of York University. That is,

*Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.*

Thus someone who is temporarily staying with friends or family, or transitioning to new housing, but has experienced long periods without a permanent home, would be considered homeless for the purposes of this work.

**Form Questions:**

- The questions included in the form are, we believe, self-explanatory. Finding the balance between collecting all the information we can gather, and providing a relatively simple and accurate collection tool, is challenging.
- The form should take ten minutes or less to complete.
- Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding its use or improvement. In addition, we are very interested in your thoughts and ideas as we work to improve this process over time.
- One question that has been raised concerns the use of the deceased person's name. The decision to include a space for the name was based on the prevailing feeling that homeless people are nameless for too long and that they deserve to be named in death. Including the name will also improve the quality of the data. Although we encourage you to include it, you may omit it if you wish.

**Confidentiality:**

- All information will, of course, be treated confidentially and follow applicable privacy laws. The TPH Privacy Officer has approved the use of FluidSurveys to collect this information. The highest degrees of protection available with this software are being used. Information from the survey will be downloaded to a secure, local drive and then deleted from the Fluidsurvey.
- If you still have concerns about this. Please contact Joyce Bernstein below to arrange an alternative reporting method. (Please see <http://fluidsurveys.com/canada/data-privacy-canada/> for more information on privacy concerns.)

**Tracking and verifying:**

- The Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario will be contacted for verification of death, in all cases.
- Duplicate reports will be detected by comparison of various pieces of information, such as name, gender, age, and place and date of death. We will combine information from various sources to assemble the most complete and accurate information possible. As such, it will be very helpful to have the contact information of those reporting to us. However, this information is not mandatory.

Toronto Public Health, has a result of direction by City Council, has tried to raise awareness of this project by reaching out to many individuals and networks involved with the homeless community. Inevitably, not everyone has been reached. Your help in sharing this information throughout your agencies and networks would be much appreciated. Again, please do not hesitate to contact Joyce Bernstein below to discuss any aspects of the project. It is hoped it will be an important step in improving the health and lives of this most vulnerable population.

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