

**From:** [Ryan Ibach](#)  
**To:** [Maxford Nelsen](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths  
**Date:** Thursday, June 11, 2020 2:18:42 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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In Yakima County, we only count deaths of persons who tested positive for COVID-19 *and* died for reasons related to the virus. Every death in Yakima County is followed up on by our Director of Disease Control to make sure this is accurate.



**Ryan Ibach, R.S.**

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Yakima Health District  
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**From:** Maxford Nelsen <MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 11, 2020 1:01 PM  
**To:** Ryan Ibach <ryan.ibach@co.yakima.wa.us>  
**Subject:** RE: Counting COVID-19 deaths

**CAUTION :** This email originated from outside of this organization. Please exercise caution with links and attachments.

Just checking in on this. Thanks!

**Maxford Nelsen**

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**From:** Maxford Nelsen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 1:04 PM  
**To:** [ryan.ibach@co.yakima.wa.us](mailto:ryan.ibach@co.yakima.wa.us)  
**Subject:** Counting COVID-19 deaths

Mr. Ibach,

This isn't a PRR, but I have a question regarding Yakima County's method for counting COVID-19

deaths and I hope you might be able to at least get me pointed in the right direction. Specifically, what criteria does the county use when counting a death as related to COVID-19?

I've so far identified two different methods used by various public health agencies in Washington.

The statewide COVID-19 fatality count publicized by the Washington Department of Health includes any person who tested positive for COVID-19 and subsequently died, even if the death certificate made no mention of COVID-19 as playing a role in the death.

However, I know some county health departments only count deaths of persons who tested positive for COVID-19 *and* died for reasons related to the virus. In [Thurston County](#), for instance, “[a]n individual is counted as a COVID-19 death if they were diagnosed with COVID-19 and died due to health complications related to the illness.”

Which method does Yakima County use? Or does it use a different method entirely?

Thanks in advance for your time.

Best,

**Maxford Nelsen**

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