

**From:** [EOC PIO](#)  
**To:** [Maxford Nelsen](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [External] Counting COVID-19 deaths  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 10, 2020 12:42:26 PM

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Mr. Nelsen,

In Walla Walla County a death is only counted as a COVID-19 death if the decedent tested positive for COVID-19 and died due to health complications from the virus.

Thank you.

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**From:** Maxford Nelsen <[MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com](mailto:MNelsen@freedomfoundation.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 1:23 PM  
**To:** Health Dept <[health@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:health@co.walla-walla.wa.us)>  
**Subject:** [External] Counting COVID-19 deaths

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Walla Walla County Staff,

I have a question regarding Walla Walla County's method for counting COVID-19 deaths that I hope you can help me with. 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 Walla Walla County use? Or does it use a different method entirely?

Thanks in advance for your time.

Best,

## **Maxford Nelsen**

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