

This excerpt is from the Funeral Director's Handbook, available at its entirety at:

Curtin SC, Tolson G, Arias E, Anderson RN. Funeral director's handbook: Death registration and fetal death reporting. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2019.

or

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/handbook/2019-Funeral-Directors-Handbook-508.pdf>

The following are directions for completing items on the standard death certificate related to race and ethnicity, that are to be completed or verified by a funeral director.

This resource also includes a card (Appendix IV), that a funeral director can use with an informant to indicate the race or races that the decedent considered himself or herself to be.

52. DECEDENT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN? Check the box that best describes whether the decedent is Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. Check the “No” box if the decedent is not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

- ☐ No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino (Specify) _____

Hispanic persons comprise a substantial population group within this country. Reliable data are needed to identify and assess public health problems of Hispanic persons. Information from item 52 permits the production of mortality data for the Hispanic community. Identifying health problems makes it possible to target public health resources to this important population segment.

“Hispanic” is not a race, and a decedent of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

“Hispanic” is a self-designated classification for people whose origins are from Spain, Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, Caribbean, or who identify themselves generally as Spanish or Spanish American. Origin can be viewed as ancestry, nationality, or country of birth of the person or person’s parents or ancestors prior to their arrival in the United States.

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated the use of specific guidelines in collecting information on race and ethnicity, separating the ethnicity item from the race item. Thus, the Hispanic origin (item 52) and Race (item 53) items should be asked independently. Do not leave item 52 blank. Based on the informant’s response,

check the box (see card in [Appendix IV](#)) that best corresponds with the decedent's ethnic identity as given by the informant. The response should reflect what the decedent considered himself or herself to be.

The informant is encouraged to select only one response.

Enter the informant's response even if it is not a Hispanic origin.

If the informant is unable to select a single response, mark all boxes that apply; for example, if the informant selects both "Mexican" and "Cuban," enter both responses.

If the respondent indicates an ethnic origin not on the list, it should be recorded in the "Specify" space.

If the informant does not know, enter "Unknown."

If there is no informant, enter "Not obtainable."

If informant refuses, enter "Refused."

53. DECEDENT'S RACE (Check one or more races to indicate what the decedent considered himself or herself to be)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (Name of the enrolled or principal tribe)
- ☐ Asian Indian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Other Asian (Specify) _____
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Other Pacific Islander (Specify) _____
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

Race is essential for identifying specific mortality patterns and leading causes of death among different racial groups. It is also used to determine if specific health programs are needed in particular areas and to make population estimates. In 1997, OMB mandated the

use of specific guidelines in collecting information on race and ethnicity and provided an opportunity for persons to choose more than one racial category.

The Race (item 53) and Hispanic origin (item 52) questions should be asked independently. Do not leave item 53 blank.

Ask the informant to look at the card ([Appendix IV](#)) and indicate the race or races that the decedent considered himself or herself to be.

Enter the race or races of the decedent as stated by the informant.

If no checkbox corresponds to the informant's response for one or more race, check the "Other (Specify)" box and enter the informant's literal (verbal or written) response in the blank, even if the response is not a race or race(s).

American Indian or Alaska Native refers only to those native to North or South America (including Central America) and does not include Asian Indian. Specify the name of the enrolled or principal tribe (e.g., Navajo or Cheyenne) for American Indian or Alaska Native.

For Asian or Pacific Islander, enter the national origin of the decedent. For Asian, check Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, or specify "Other Asian" group. For Pacific Islander, check Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, or specify "Other Pacific Islander."

If more than one race is indicated, check each race (e.g., Samoan–Chinese–Filipino or White–American Indian).

If there is no informant or other reliable source for this information, enter "Not obtainable."

If the respondent does not know, enter "Unknown."

If the respondent refuses, enter "Refused."

Appendix IV. Race and Hispanic-origin Selection Cards

DECEDENT’S HISPANIC ORIGIN SELECTION CARD

Please review all responses below. Please pick the response that best describes whether the decedent is Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. Choose the NO response if the decedent is not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

- A. No, Not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- B. Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
- C. Yes, Puerto Rican
- D. Yes, Cuban
- E. Yes, Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- F. If your choice is E. (Spanish/Hispanic/Latino) please specify.

DECEDENT’S RACES(S) SELECTION CARD DECEDENT’S RACE(S)

Which Item(s) below best describe what race(s) the decedent considered himself/herself to be? Select all that apply.

- A. White
- B. Black or African American
- C. American Indian or Alaska Native (Name of the enrolled or principal tribe)
- D. Asian Indian
- E. Chinese
- F. Filipino
- G. Japanese
- H. Korean
- I. Vietnamese
- J. Other Asian (Specify)_____
- K. Native American
- L. Guamanian or Chamorro
- M. Samoan
- N. Other Pacific Islander (Specify)_____
- O. Other (Specify)_____