

24 March 2016

P A Hamill
fyi-request-3681-0b68f31e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Hamill

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 25 February 2016.

Your request

You asked for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1 Is it the case manager at the time of the claimants death that puts the "summary of information together for the Coroner? If the answer is no why ?

2- if not the case manager at the time of the death, is it done in the branch that the claim was dealt with?

3- if it is not,the branch that puts the summary together what "branch or section " of ACC goes through the file and summarises the information for the coroner?

4- The "staff" that are made available to deal with any further requests made by the coroner what position do they hold at ACC i.e. do the fall into 1- 2- 3- from the above questions.

If the staff come under question 3- above can you please detail the position at ACC the staff member would hold.

5- After a suicide at what point is the electronic file "secured" or closed so that no changes or further information can be added or removed to any information contained within the claimant file?

6- In the last 15 years how many requests have been made by the coroners court to ACC regarding claimant files?

Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 – Responsibility for responding to Coronial requests

Responsibility for preparing ACC's responses to requests for information from a Coroner sits with ACC's Government Services team. A Team Manager in the Government Services team has extensive experience in medico-legal matters. With the assistance of other members of the Government Services team, the Team Manager prepares the information in the form requested by the Coroner. This is typically summarised reports and timelines - which are based on careful review and consideration of a client's file and with a view to assisting the Coroner to the fullest extent possible.

The Government Services team liaises with the relevant branch and business units for the purpose of preparing the relevant material. The material prepared for the Coroner is then subjected to a rigorous quality assurance process before being released.

Question 5 – Closure of a client's file

A file is closed when all entitlements have been paid and no further action is needed on the file.

A closed file can always be reopened and further information added. For example, if ACC receives the Coroner's final findings, or if a new dependant applies for entitlements on a claim.

A file would also be opened if ACC receives a review application, or a request for a copy file.

ACC would not normally edit information that was already on a file, but rather add new information to the file. Information would only be edited or removed if it was found to have been incorrectly added to a file. Any actions taken on a file are tracked and recorded.

Question 6 – Coronial requests regarding ACC claim files

As explained previously, if the Coroner has requested information from ACC while investigating a death, it has only been for information relevant to the Coroner's investigation – not specifically for the claimant's file. As this only rarely happens, ACC has not kept a record of the number of requests for information made by the Coroner over the years.

We can however advise that in the last 12 months, when the Coroner has requested information to assist in the investigation of a death, ACC has provided the Coroner with less than four summarised reports on the information requested. Those responses have taken the form of summaries and timelines as that is what the Coroner has directed ACC to provide.

Once again, we advise that ACC does not disclose data below a certain value. This limits the potential for particular individuals or matters specific to certain individuals to be identified. For this reason, our advice notes "less than four summarised reports" on the grounds that withholding is necessary to protect the privacy of specific individuals under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. In doing so, we have considered the public interest in making the information available and have determined that it does not outweigh the need to protect the privacy of (deceased) natural persons.

Queries or concerns

If you have any questions, ACC will be happy to work with you to answer these. You can contact us at GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz or in writing to *Government Services, PO Box 242, Wellington 6140*.

You have the right to complain to the Office of the Ombudsman. You can call them on 0800 802 602 between 9am and 5pm on weekdays, or write to *The Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143*.

Yours sincerely

Government Services