

Central Midwives Board  
SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN



RULES D.

Regulating, Supervising and Restricting within due limits the  
Practice of Midwives and Defining the Emergencies  
in which a Midwife shall call in a  
Registered Medical Practitioner  
to her Assistance



(As approved by the Minister for Local Government and  
Public Health, 18th October, 1926 and 4th October, 1929)

*Handwritten initials: J. H. H. H.*

## Central Midwives' Board, Saorstát Éireann

**RULE D.—REGULATING, SUPERVISING AND RESTRICTING WITHIN DUE LIMITS THE PRACTICE OF MIDWIVES AND DEFINING THE EMERGENCIES IN WHICH A MIDWIFE SHALL CALL IN A REGISTERED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER TO HER ASSISTANCE.**

*Directions to Midwives concerning their Person, Instruments, &c.; their Duties to Patient and Child; and their Obligations with regard to Disinfection, Medical Assistance and Notification.*

1.—(a) When engaged to attend a confinement the midwife must interview her patient at the earliest opportunity to inquire as to the course of present and previous pregnancies, confinements and puerperia, both as regards mother and child, and to advise as to personal and general arrangements for the confinement, and, with the consent of the patient, visit the house.

**NOTE.**—Certain Local Authorities now provide Health Visitors, Maternity Centres, or Child Welfare Centres for the assistance of the mother before and after the birth of the child. The midwife should advise the patient to avail herself of such help, where available.

(b) Whenever illness or abnormality has occurred in the previous pregnancy, and whenever the previous pregnancy has ended in an abortion, a premature labour, or a still-birth, the midwife, on being engaged to attend the patient in her next confinement, should explain that the case is one in which skilled medical advice is required, and shall urge the patient to seek advice from her medical attendant, or at a hospital or other suitable institution.

2. The midwife must be scrupulously clean in every way, including her person, clothing, appliances and house; she must keep her nails cut short and well brushed, and preserve the skin of her hands as far as possible from cracks and abrasions.

**NOTE.**—Unless the cleansing process be thoroughly carried out there will be, even after a healthy confinement, remains of blood, lochia, or liquor amnii on the fingers, and especially

under the nails, which will there undergo decomposition, and so become dangerous to the next patient attended.

When attending to her patients she must wear a clean dress of washable material that can be boiled, such as linen or cotton, and over it a clean washable apron or overall.

The sleeves of the dress must be made so that the midwife can tuck them up well above the elbows.

For list of appliances *see* Rule 3.

3. When called to a confinement a midwife must always have in her possession, and take with her a metal case or bag or basket kept for professional purposes only and furnished with a removable lining which can be disinfected, containing:—

- (a) An appliance for giving vaginal injections, a different appliance for giving enemata, a catheter, a pair of scissors, a clinical thermometer and a nail brush.

The Local Supervising Authority may, in the case of untrained midwives, use its discretion with regard to insisting upon the carrying of a catheter and appliances for giving vaginal injections.

- (b) An efficient antiseptic or efficient antiseptics for such purposes as

- (1) Disinfecting the hands.
- (2) Douching in special cases.
- (3) Cleansing the infant's eyelids.

4. Before touching the generative organs or their neighbourhood the midwife must on each occasion disinfect her hands and forearms.

5. All instruments and other appliances must be disinfected, preferably by boiling, before being brought into contact with the patient's generative organs.

\*6. Whenever a midwife has been in attendance, whether as a midwife or as a nurse, upon a patient, or in contact with a person suffering from puerperal fevers or from any other condition supposed to be infectious, or is herself liable to be a source of infection, she must at once notify the Local Supervising Authority of the fact, must (unless the Authority relieve her from that obligation) disinfect herself and all her instruments and other appliances, and have her clothing thoroughly disinfected, to the satisfaction of the Local Supervising Authority before going to any other maternity

\* This is a direction to practising midwives, and is not to be taken as relieving a pupil undergoing a course of training from any of the obligations entailed upon her by Rule C 1 (1) (a).

patient. (See Rule D 22 (1) (c), p. 8, and Rule 23, Form (c), p. 12).

Unless otherwise directed by the Local Supervising Authority, all washable clothing must be boiled, and other clothing must be sent to be disinfected by the Local Authority.

### Board of Health.

NOTE.—The Local Supervising Authority under the Midwives (Ireland) Act, 1918, is the ~~County Council~~ for midwives practising in a county area, and the County Borough Council for midwives practising in a County Borough.

#### *Duties to Patient.*

7. A midwife in charge of a case of labour must not leave the patient without giving an address by which she can be found without delay; and, after the commencement of the Second Stage, she must stay with the woman until the expulsion of the placenta and membranes, and as long after as may be necessary. In cases where a doctor has been sent for on account of the labour being abnormal or of there being threatened danger (*see* Rule 20), she must await his arrival and faithfully carry out his instructions.

If for any reason the services of a registered medical practitioner be not available, the midwife must, if the case be one of emergency, remain with the patient and do her best for her until the emergency is over.

After having complied with the Rule as to the summoning of medical assistance, the midwife will not incur any legal liability by remaining on duty and doing her best for her patient.

8. The midwife must wash the patient's external parts with soap and water, and then swab them with an efficient antiseptic solution on the following occasions:—

- (a) Before making the first internal examination;
- (b) After the termination of labour;
- (c) During the lying-in period when washing is required;
- (d) Before passing a catheter.

The swabbing with antiseptic solution must be repeated before each further examination and before a douche is given. For this purpose the midwife must on no account use ordinary sponges or flannels, but material which has been boiled or otherwise disinfected before use.

\*9. No more internal examinations should be made than are absolutely necessary.

10. The midwife in charge must in all cases of labour examine the placenta and membranes before they are destroyed, and must satisfy herself that they are completely removed.

11. The midwife must remove soiled linen, blood, fæces, urine, placenta and membranes from the neighbourhood of the patient and from the lying-in room as soon as possible after the labour, and in every case before she leaves the patient's house.

\*12. The midwife shall be responsible for the cleanliness, and shall give all necessary directions for securing the comfort and proper dieting, of the mother and child during the lying-in period, which shall be held, for the purpose of these Regulations, and in a normal case, to mean the time occupied by the labour and a period of ten days thereafter.

Should the midwife for any reason continue her attendance after the tenth day the fact must be noted in her Register, with the explanation of the reason.

If after ceasing to attend a case the midwife is again called in to an illness of the mother or the child connected with the confinement, all rules under Section D (in so far as they are appropriate to the case) shall apply.

\*12a. A midwife must forthwith notify the Local Supervising Authority of each case in which it is proposed to substitute artificial feeding for breast feeding. [See Rule D 22 (1) (f) and D 23, form (f).]

NOTE.—The midwife should endeavour to promote breast feeding and should, when breast feeding cannot apparently be continued, urge medical advice. Certain Local Authorities now provide Health Visitors and Maternity and Child Welfare Centres. It is desirable that the midwife when she ceases attendance should advise the patient to avail herself of such help.

13. A case of normal labour in these Regulations shall mean a labour in which there are none of the conditions specified in Rule 21.

14. The midwife shall take and record accurately the pulse and temperature of the patient at each visit, entering her records, with dates and times, in a note book or on charts, which must be carefully preserved.

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\* See Rule 26.

*Duties to Child.*

15. In the case of a child born apparently dead the midwife must carry out the methods of resuscitation which have been taught her.

16. As soon as the child's head is born, and if possible before the eyes are opened, its eyelids must be carefully cleansed.

17. On the birth of a child which is in danger of death, the midwife shall inform the relatives or other responsible person.

*General.*

18. No midwife shall lay out a dead body except in the case of a patient upon whom she has been in attendance at the time of death.

After laying out a dead body for burial she must notify the Local Supervising Authority and undergo adequate cleansing and disinfection in accordance with Rule D 6.

*ERRATUM.*

Last line on page 5 should read:—

to send, or to hand, to him *an additional* form of sending for

Rule D 24, Note p. 15).

*Conditions in which Medical Assistance must be sent for.*

\*20. In all cases of illness of the patient or child, or of any abnormality occurring during pregnancy, labour, or lying-in, a midwife, as soon as she becomes aware thereof, must call in to her assistance a registered medical practitioner, using for this purpose the form of sending for medical help [see Rule 23 (a)] properly filled up and signed by her. The conditions referred to in this rule shall be deemed to be emergencies for the purpose of Section 22 of the Midwives (Ireland) Act, 1918.

If a midwife has summoned medical aid in respect of any emergency and any other emergency occurs in the subsequent progress of the case, it is her duty to draw the doctor's attention to such emergency, and it is also desirable for her to send, or to hand, to him the form of sending for

\* See Rule 26.

medical help properly filled up and signed by her. The Local Supervising Authority should, of course, be notified of each emergency in respect of which the doctor's advice is sought, as required by Rule E 22 (1) (a).

\*21. The foregoing rule shall particularly apply :—

- (1) In all cases in which a woman during PREGNANCY, LABOUR, or LYING-IN appears to be dying or is dead.

*Pregnancy.*

- (2) In the case of a PREGNANT woman, when there is any abnormality or complication, such as—

Deformity or stunted growth,  
Loss of blood,  
Abortion or threatened abortion,  
Excessive sickness,  
Puffiness of hands or face,  
Fits or convulsions,  
• Dangerous varicose veins,  
Purulent discharge,  
Sores of the genitals.

*Labour.*

- (3) In the case of a woman in LABOUR at or near term, when there is any abnormality or complication, such as—

Fits or Convulsions,  
A purulent discharge,  
Sores of the genitals  
A breech presentation in a primipara  
Presentation other than the uncomplicated head or breech,  
Where no presentation can be made out,  
Where there is excessive bleeding,  
Where two hours after the birth of the child the placenta has not been completely expelled,  
In cases of rupture of the perineal body or of other injuries of the soft parts,  
Where the administration or application of a drug, other than a simple aperient, before the birth of the child is considered desirable.

\* See Rule 26.

*Lying-in.*

- (4) In the case of a LYING-IN woman when there is any abnormality or complication, such as—
- Fits or Convulsions.
  - Abdominal swelling and tenderness.
  - Offensive lochia, if persistent,
  - Rigor, with raised temperature,
  - Rise of temperature above **100.4 F.** with quickening of the pulse for more than twenty-four hours.
  - Unusual swelling of the breasts with local tenderness or pain,
  - Secondary post-partum hæmorrhage,
  - White leg.

*The Child.*

- (5) In the case of the CHILD, when there is any abnormality or complication, such as—
- Injuries received during birth,
  - Any malformation or deformity endangering the child's life,
  - Dangerous feebleness,
  - † Inflammation of, or discharge from, the eyes, however slight,
  - Serious skin eruptions, especially those marked by the formation of watery blisters,
  - Inflammation about, or hæmorrhage from, the navel.

*Notification to the Local Supervising Authority.*

\*22.—(1) The midwife must, as soon as possible, send notice on the prescribed form to the Local Supervising

† NOTE.—In cases where the eyes are affected the duties of the midwife are :—

- (1) To call in to her assistance a registered medical Practitioner using for this purpose the form for medical assistance (see Rules D 20, and 23 (a).
- (2) To send notice to the LOCAL SUPERVISING Authority that medical assistance has been sought (see Rules D 22 (1) (a), p. 8 and 23 (a), p. 9.
- (3) Also, when there is a purulent discharge commencing within 21 days from the date of birth and medical assistance has not been obtained for this discharge, to notify the Local Authority (see Rule D 6, note).

\* See Rule 26.

Authority, in accordance with Rule 23, in the following cases:—

- \* (a) *Medical Assistance*.—Whenever under Rule 20, p. 5, the advice of a registered medical practitioner has been sought. (Form (a), p. 9).
  - \* (b) *Deaths*.—In all cases in which the death of the mother or of the child occurs before the attendance of a registered medical practitioner. (Form (b), p. 10).
  - \* (c) *Still-births*.—In all cases of still-birth where a registered medical practitioner is not in attendance at the time of birth. (Form (c), pp. 10 and 11).
- Note*.—A child is deemed to be still-born when after being completely born it has not breathed or shown any sign of life. (See Rule 15, p. 5).
- + (d) *Laying out the dead*.—In all cases in which she has prepared or assisted to prepare, a dead body for burial. (See Rule 18, p. 5), Form (d), p. 11).
  - \* (e) *Liability to be a source of infection*.—Whenever a midwife has been in attendance, whether as a midwife or as a nurse, upon a patient, or in contact with a person, suffering from puerperal fevers or from any other condition supposed to be infectious, or is herself liable to be a source of infection. (See Rule D. 6, p. 2, and Rule D. 23, Form (e), p. 12).
  - \* (f) *Artificial feeding*.—Whenever under Rule 12A, it is proposed to substitute artificial feeding for breast feeding. (Form (f), p. 13).

(2) *Change of name or address*.—All midwives, whether practising or not, must immediately notify the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann, and the Local Supervising Authority of any change of name or address.

*Note*.—*Intention to practise*.—Notice of intention to practise must be given in accordance with Section 18 of the Midwives (Ireland) Act, 1918. (Form VIII.)

\*23. For the purposes of the preceding rules the use of the following forms shall be compulsory:—

MIDWIVES (IRELAND) ACT, 1918.

(a) Form of sending for Medical Assistance.

No..... Date.....

This notice is sent on behalf of (a) .....

Address .....

Medical assistance has been sought by (b).....

(c) The case is urgent.

Sent to (name of doctor or institution).....

At (address) .....

Time of sending message

By messenger.....

By telephone.....

Signed.....Certified Midwife.

The midwife shall make two copies of the above, making, with the original document, three forms in all. The original she shall keep, the second she shall send to the doctor in case of assistance being sought by her (not where assistance has been sought by the relative or friend only), and the third she shall send to the Local Supervising Authority as soon as possible, but within 24 hours at the latest.

NOTE.

The medical practitioner called in by a midwife in a case of emergency as defined in these Rules is entitled to be paid a fee by the Local Supervising Authority in accordance with a scale prescribed by the Minister for Local Government and Public Health unless the patient is entitled to receive relief under Section 9 of the Poor Relief (I.) Act, 1881. [See section 22 Midwives (I.) Act, 1918.]

\* See Rule 26.

(a) Here fill in name of patient.  
(b) Here insert "me" or "relation" or "friend," as the case may be.  
(c) If the case is not urgent cross this out.

(b) *Form of Notification of Death*

To the Local Supervising Authority of

†the County of.....  
or †the County Borough of.....

I, the undersigned, being a Midwife holding the Certificate No..... of the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann, hereby notify that the following death occurred in my practice on the ..... day of ..... 19....., before a registered medical practitioner was in attendance.

Name of deceased .....

Address of deceased .....

Age of deceased .....

Date of Delivery .....

Signed ..... Certified Midwife.

Address .....

.....

(c) *Form of Notification of Still-birth.*

To the Local Supervising Authority of

†the County of.....  
or †the County Borough of.....

I, the undersigned, being a Midwife holding the Certificate No..... of the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann, hereby notify that on the ..... day of ..... 19.....

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† Strike out words not applicable.

living at .....

was delivered { †by me .....  
                  { †before my arrival .....

of a still-born child, no registered medical practitioner being  
in attendance at the time of birth.

Sex .....

Full term or premature (No. of Months).....

Condition of child (whether macerated or not).....

.....

Presentation .....

Signed ..... Certified Midwife.

Address .....

.....

*(d) Form of Notification of having Laid Out a Dead Body.*

To the Local Supervising Authority of

†the County of.....

or †the County Borough of.....

I, the undersigned, being a Midwife holding the Certificate  
No..... of the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát  
Éireann, hereby notify that on the ..... day of .....  
19....., I †prepared or †assisted to prepare the dead body of

.....

on whom I was in attendance at the time of death, the  
particulars in respect of which are as below:—

Name of deceased .....

Address of deceased .....

.....

Age of deceased .....

† Strike out words not applicable.

Cause of death .....

Signed ..... Certified Midwife.

Address .....

.....

(e) *Form of Notification of Liability to be a Source of Infection.*

To the Local Supervising Authority of

†the County of.....

or †the County Borough of.....

I, the undersigned, being a Midwife holding the Certificate No..... of the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann, hereby notify that,

on the.....day of....., 19....., I was } †

†In attendance upon or, †In contact with

Name.....

Address.....

a person suffering from a condition supposed to be infectious, viz. :—

.....

or

I †am myself suffering from, or †have recently suffered } †  
from.....

Signed ..... Certified Midwife.

Address .....

.....

† Strike out words not applicable.

(f) Form of Notification of Artificial Feeding.

To the Local Supervising Authority of  
†the County of.....  
or †the County Borough of.....

I, the undersigned, being a Midwife holding the Certificate  
No..... of the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann,  
hereby notify that while in attendance on

Name .....  
Address .....

it was proposed to substitute bottle-feeding for breast-feeding  
because .....

The child was born on the ..... day of ....., 19.....

Signed ..... Certified Midwife.

Address .....

24. A midwife shall keep a Register of Cases in the fol-  
lowing form:—

*Midwife's Register of Cases.*

No.....

Date of expected confinement .....

Name and address of patient .....

Age.....

No. of previous labours and miscarriages .....

Date and hour of Midwife's arrival .....

Presentation .....

Date and hour of Child's birth .....

Sex of infant ..... Born living or dead .....

Full time or premature ..... No. of weeks .....

Name of Doctor if called .....

† Strike out words not applicable.

Complications (if any) during or after labour .....

.....

*Date of Midwife's last visit* .....

Condition of Mother then .....

.....

Condition of Child then .....

Remarks† .....

.....

.....

\*25. The Local Supervising Authority shall make arrangements to secure a proper inspection of the Register of cases, bag of appliances, etc., of every midwife practising in the district of such Authority, and, when thought necessary, an inspection of her place of residence, and an investigation of her mode of practice. The midwife shall give every reasonable facility for such inspection.

26. The rules or parts of rules in these Rules (*D*) which are marked with an asterisk shall not apply to midwives exercising their calling under the supervision of a duly appointed medical officer within Hospitals approved by the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann. These Rules are 6, 12, 12A, 20, 21, 22 (1), 23 and 25.

27. No rule in this section (*D*) other than Rule 22 (2) shall apply to Certified Midwives exercising their calling in Poor Law Institutions under the supervision of a duly appointed medical officer.

28. The proper designation of a certified midwife is "Certified Midwife," thus, *e.g.*,

Mary Smith,  
Certified Midwife.

No abbreviation in the form of initial letters is recognised, nor any other description of the qualification.

Provided that a midwife whose name has been admitted to the Roll in virtue of having passed the Examination of the Central Midwives Board, Saorstát Éireann, or in virtue of a qualification under Sections 2, 11, or 28 of the Midwives (Ireland) Act, 1918, acquired by passing an Examination in Midwifery, may add the words "by examination" after the words Certified Midwife.

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‡ If any drug, other than a simple aperient, has been administered in any way, state here the name and dose of the drug and the time and cause of its administration. (*See* Rule 19, p. 5.)

\* *See* Rule *D* 26.

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*Falconer, Dublin.*