



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SUIDI Reporting Form—EV  
Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation  
Reporting Form—Electronic Version

**User Manual**  
**Version 1.0**  
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## History and Background

Each year in the United States, more than 4,500 infants die suddenly of no obvious cause. Half of these sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUID) are due to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), the leading cause of SUID and of all deaths among infants aged 1–12 months.

The SIDS rate has been declining significantly since the early 1990s. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) research has found that some deaths that would have been classified as SIDS before 1999 are now being classified as accidental suffocation or unknown/unspecified cause, suggesting that diagnostic and reporting practices have changed. This trend information concerned the CDC because inaccurate or inconsistent cause-of-death determination and reporting hamper the ability to monitor national trends, ascertain risk factors, and design and evaluate programs to prevent these deaths.

Many SUID cases are not investigated, and when they are, cause-of-death data are not collected and reported consistently. Inaccurate classification of cause and manner of death hampers prevention efforts and researchers are unable to adequately monitor national trends, identify risk factors, or evaluate intervention programs. We need valid and reliable data to support research and prevention efforts if we want to reduce these infant deaths.

In 2003, CDC began leading the effort to revise the 1996 Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation (SUIDI) Reporting Form and Guidelines for the scene investigation, as well as actively educating and disseminating training materials on infant death scene investigations to improve inaccurate classification of SUID in the United States. In 2004, CDC's Division of Reproductive Health (DRH) and its partners implemented additional activities aimed at improving the accuracy and consistency of the reporting and classification of SUID deaths. These activities included the development of a new standard investigation reporting form, training curriculum materials for conducting a thorough SUID death scene investigation, a planned effort to disseminate and promote the use of these SUID investigations tools and materials, and the development of a SUID case registry.

The new Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation (SUIDI) Reporting Form, including the electronic version (EV), was developed to standardize and improve data collected at infant death scenes. This new reporting form replaces the 1996 Guidelines for the Death Scene Investigation of Sudden Unexplained Infant Death and the Investigation Report Form (SUIDIRF).

## The SUIDI Reporting Form

The new SUIDI Reporting Form is important for the following reasons:

- It contains 25 questions that medical examiners and coroners should ask before beginning an autopsy.
- It guides investigators through the steps involved in an investigation.
- It allows investigators to document their findings easily and consistently.
- It improves classification of SIDS and other SUIDs by standardizing data collection.
- It produces information that researchers can use to recognize new health threats and risk factors for infant death so that future deaths can be prevented.

These are the following improvements in the SUIDI Reporting Form:

- It now contains only questions to which answers will 1) establish cause and manner of death and 2) support investigators' findings in court.
- It contains new questions about recently identified risk factors.
- The answers to the questions can be checked off quickly, which allows for easy, consistent data collection.
- The questions are in a sequence that works well for infant death investigations.
- The form is divided into sections. A particular member of the death investigation team is responsible for a specific section.
- The additional SUIDI forms for collecting information about contacts and evidence are available for jurisdictions that do not have their own.

The SUIDI Reporting Form is an information collection tool for novice and veteran investigators of infant deaths. The form is designed to ensure that all information is collected in a consistent, sensitive manner. The form is designed as a questionnaire and the investigator can read the questions to the person being interviewed. Most questions can be answered by placing an "x" in the corresponding box or filling in the blank. The eight-page form is divided into eight sections that are available as tabs in the electronic version.

Additional investigative forms can be used by death scene investigators to collect information about the circumstances surrounding a sudden unexplained infant death and to document personal contacts and collection of evidence. While these forms can be used in addition to the Primary SUIDI Reporting Form to collect important investigative information, this information is not thought to be essential prior to autopsy.

Each page of the SUIDI Reporting Form, as well as the additional investigative forms in this application, closely resembles the hard copy and pdf (Adobe formatted file) copy of the SUIDI Reporting Form available for download at <http://www.cdc.gov/sids>.

### **The SUIDI Reporting Form—Electronic Version**

This SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV application was designed to assist investigative agencies in their quest to understand the circumstances and factors contributing to unexplained deaths in infants. Many agencies prefer to have an electronic data entry system to record the information collected on the SUIDI Reporting Form. Users will not have to enter data more than once and readable reports can be printed right from the database with the electronic version of the SUIDI Reporting Form. The electronic application runs using the Access program on the Windows Operating System, allowing most offices to easily install, use, and even modify the forms in Access with the assistance of your IT department or programmer. The application also can be used by individual agencies and jurisdictions to report, track information, and better understand the characteristics of SUID deaths in their local area so that statistical reports can be easily created and disseminated.

### **Installation Instructions**

The following installation instructions apply exclusively to those made directly from CDs.

- Select and open or create the folder in your PC into which you will be installing the SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV application (ex: ..\My documents\SUID\).
- Insert CD into your CD-Rom drive.
- Select the SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV Access application icon in the My Computer file located on your desktop.
- Copy/Transfer the application into the desired file that you created in step 1 or simply drag-and-drop the icon into the desired folder.
- Double-click the application icon in desired target folder when you are ready to run it.

### Using the SUIDI RF —EV

The electronic version contains the Primary SUIDI Reporting Form as well as ten additional investigative forms. Each form has been designed based on the needs of the different agencies collecting this information. You may enter data for each of these forms by selecting the appropriate button from the control tab.

When you open the SUIDI RF—EV, you will see a blue screen with the CDC logo and SUID. This will quickly disappear and the first screen of the reporting form will be displayed. You will automatically start in the Primary SUID Form tab, in the Infant Demographics section.



Across the top of your screen, you will see the other seven sections associated with the Primary SUID Form tab.

### Main Control Tabs

The main control tabs allow the user to select specific SUIDI forms. All of these forms collect information for a particular case record in the system. Both primary and additional forms are available for use. The primary forms are for information essential to case identification, while the additional forms provide supplemental information.

There are eight primary forms contained within the first tab, “*Primary SUIDI Form.*” while the ten supplemental forms are contained within the second tab, “*Additional SUID Investigative Forms.*”



The third tab, “*Investigation Diagrams,*” allows users to attach graphical diagrams, pictures, or images that are related to a particular case. (For information on how to add graphic files to a case, please refer to the General Information section of this document).

The “*System Configuration*” tab allows users to configure and tailor the application to their particular needs.

The “*InLine Help and Support*” tab provides information on how to obtain additional support. It is an electronic copy of this user manual.

The SUIDI RF—EV operates in three different modes: VIEW, EDIT, or ADD.

By default, each record already stored in the database is displayed in the VIEW mode. The VIEW mode prevents users from changing any information.

**Entering Data**

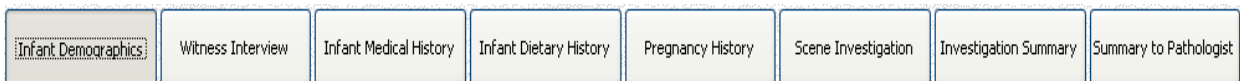
All forms follow the same pattern of input—you must be in EDIT or ADD mode in order to enter data. The default VIEW mode prevents you from modifying any existing or new data (see [Navigation Bar](#) description for more information on this topic).



Because the SUIDI RF—EV is set to the VIEW mode as a default, you must click “Add New Record” in the bottom right Navigation Bar. This will be the only choice illuminated. You are now in the ADD mode. Once you enter the basic identifying information, this information will appear as a header on all forms. You continue entering case information on this infant death until you have completed all the information necessary.

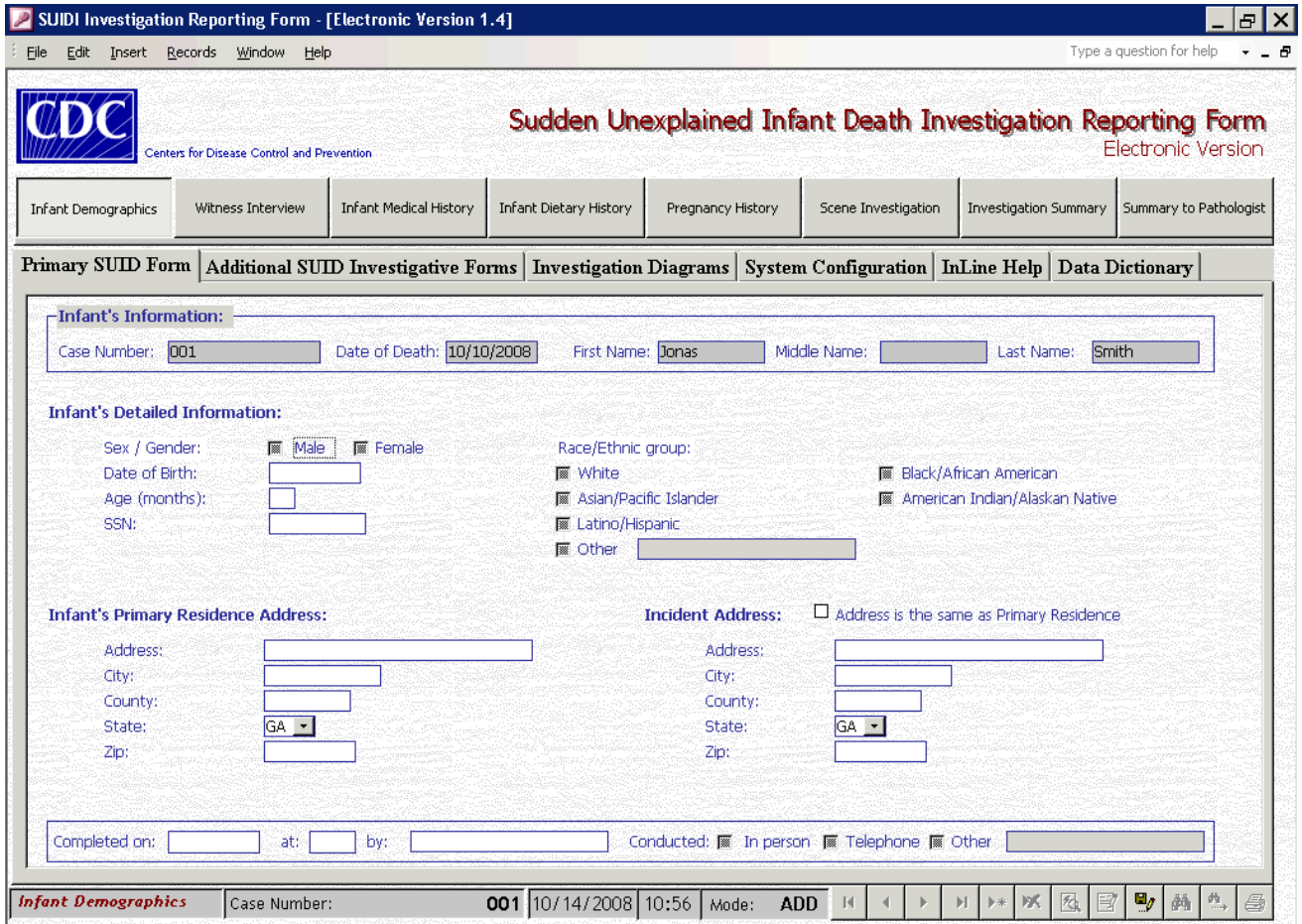
To enter or edit information, you must be in the EDIT mode. The EDIT mode is reached by pressing the EDIT button on the bottom right side Navigation Bar. Information on how to enter the EDIT mode is presented in the Navigation Bar section.

You do not have to enter data in all forms in order to generate a valid record. A record will be generated when you enter data in at least one form.

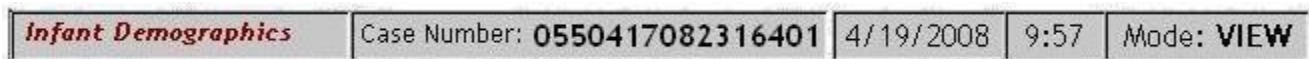


Each control tab will display a set of forms, from which you can select a specific form to enter information. The previous example shows the sections presented when the “*Primary SUIDI Form*” tab is selected from the main control tab. By selecting the

“Primary SUIDI Form” tab, the user can enter data into any of the eight available sections shown above (e.g., Infant Demographics, Witness Interview, Infant Medical History).



### Status Bar



When the SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV is in use, the status bar will appear at the bottom left of the screen. The status bar will allow you to keep track of the status of each record and what is being displayed by providing information that is constantly updated.

The first section, located at the far left of the status bar and highlighted in red, identifies the current form that is being displayed on the screen.

The second section identifies the Case Number that the user is currently viewing.

Current date and time are also displayed in the status bar.

The last section, located at the far right, displays the current input mode. In the examples, the input mode is in VIEW.

## Navigation Bar



This Navigation Bar is found in the bottom right side of the screen.

Each option on the navigation bar performs a different function.



Click this button to go to the **FIRST** record, according to case number, in the database.



Click this button to go to the record **PREVIOUS** to the current record.



Click this button to go to the **NEXT** record after the current record in the database.



Click this button to go to the **LAST** record in the database.



Click this option to add a new record to the database.



Click this button to delete a record. Deleting a record from the database is irretrievable. Once deleted, the information can not be recovered.



Click this button to **REFRESH** the data being shown.



Click this button to enter the **EDIT** mode. By default the database displays all existing data in the **VIEW** mode.



Click this button to guarantee that any data modified or entered is **SAVED**. This button is activated when the user is in either the **EDIT** or **ADD** mode.



Click this button to **FIND** or **SEARCH** for any record in the database by Case Number, Last Name, Date of Birth, or Date of Death.



Click this button to navigate through the results of a search. If more than one record is found while performing a search, this, button will be activated.



Click this button to print the information stored for any given record displayed. Depending on your system configuration you have the option of only printing pages that contain data, or you can print all pages related to a record.



### Correcting Mistakes

If you should make an error in a section with check boxes, simply check the correct box or boxes (if multiple entries are allowed). If you make a mistake in a text field, simply rewrite with the correct information. If your work has already been saved and you need to correct it, use the EDIT mode to correct your mistakes.

### Saving Your Work

The SUIDI RF—EV will save your work automatically, or you may save your work by clicking on the save button on the right bottom Navigation Bar. If you should close out of the program by accident, the program will save your work.

### System Configuration

You can modify the fields in the system configuration tab to meet your needs. Some of the fields are essential to the function of the database, such as selecting your state, and identifying the maximum age limit of the cases you would like to include in the database. Other fields are optional, such as the automatic generation of case numbers. A default system configuration is provided during installation that will fit most user needs. Make sure you tailor your system to accommodate for your specific needs.

### Modifying the SUIDI RF—EV for Your Jurisdiction

The SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV has been designed for a broad audience in recognition that a variety of agencies and individuals will use it. To accommodate the various agencies and users, SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV provides each agency/user with different SUIDI forms that can be independently used according to the user needs. Thus, a user or agency may enter information applicable to a particular form without the need to enter any other data anywhere else in the system.

Under the “*Systems Configuration*” tab, you can set the system to print only those forms and fields with information, or you may change the default setting so that all forms are printed regardless if they have been populated. These forms may then be completed at a later time or shared with other agencies.

### General Information

#### ***Mouse Wheel—Scrolling***



*A note of caution when using your mouse to scroll up or down—*

In some computers, the mouse may be equipped with a scrolling wheel (shown between the buttons in the figure on the left). When using the SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV, the scrolling wheel will **not** scroll up or down on a page in the typical manner on a manufacturer’s mouse. Instead it will scroll through the records stored in database.

If you should accidentally use the scroll wheel, your data will automatically be saved for the record you were working in and you will be navigated to the record corresponding

to the actual movements of your wheel; either the previous record if you scroll up or the next record if you scroll down.

In addition, you will be automatically placed in VIEW mode. To continue to enter data into the record you were working on, you must return to the record and enter the EDIT mode by pressing the EDIT button as described above.

To view all of the information pertaining to a particular input form, click and drag the right side bar.

### **Date and Time Fields**

The date and time fields in SUIDI REPORTING FORM—EV are formatted to receive a specific input format. Thus, the DATE field will only accept data entered in the MM/DD/YYYY format, such as 06/08/2008, and the TIME field will only accept data in military HH:MM format, such as 15:08 for 3:08 pm. To assist users, the status bar displays the current date and the current time in the appropriate formats.

### **Inserting Diagrams as Attachments**

Adding diagrams, such as photographs or drawings of the death scene, to a particular record is simple.

When in ADD or EDIT mode, go to the “SUIDI Forms” tab and then to the *Investigation Diagrams* tab.

Click the corresponding BROWSE button to search for the desired photos and diagrams(s). Only graphic images can be added to the database. Graphic files are files that end with any of the following extensions: .jpg, .jpeg, .bmp, .tiff, .jiff, .jpe, .png, .pic, .dib.

**1** Scene Diagram:

Because the files are not stored within the database, and are merely linked to the file on your computer, it is recommended that you do not move the files from their originating location. If you move the file from where it is saved on your computer, you will have to reenter the graphic file to the database. It is also suggested that graphic files be named with the corresponding case number for easier identification.

### **Warning and Disclaimer**

*This software is public domain. No individual, business, or firm of any sort is authorized to resell it or commercially redistribute it for any financial gains. Although being public domain, CDC retains the intellectual rights over this application and is only responsible for its support while no one else modifies it. If any modifications are made to the software or to any of the data structures within this application, CDC cannot be held responsible for any adverse effects, problems, or incorrect data that such modifications could potentially bring. CDC cannot be asked to fix any issues that are brought as a result of any modifications. Failure to heed this warning may render this application unusable.*

## Getting Into Access

To view and modify any of the Access basic data structures mentioned above, complete the following steps:

When you first bring up the application you will most likely see a security warning message that MS-Access gives to all users. It refers to the potential harmful code that this software may have. This message may not necessarily appear if users have previously lowered the security warning level in their own machines.

That message reads, “This file may not be safe if it contains code that was intended to harm your computer. Do you want to continue or cancel this operation?”

When prompted with this message, press the SHIFT key—keeping it pressed while clicking the OPEN button. Do this instead of initially clicking the OPEN button to run the application. This simple step unlocks the main features of the software and it brings you to the main ‘Database Window’. This window displays the data structures (tables, queries, forms, macros, etc.). The application’s menu will be fully activated as well.

You may view and/or alter all these structures from this Database Window. For example, in order to view or change the definitions of a particular table, go to the Tables menu and after selecting the desired table press the ‘Design’ button.

To run the program from the main database window go to the forms section and after selecting the MainShell form press the ‘Open’ button.

## Data Dictionary

In order to view or print the data dictionary simply go to the ‘Data Dictionary’ tab and select the type of report or printout that you desire. There are two styles to choose from—a detailed data dictionary and a minimal data dictionary. You may view and preview these before printing. Any modifications made to the application will be captured by the Data Dictionary Report and will reflect your modifications.

## Exporting Data

If you have the need to export the data contained in one or more tables, Microsoft Access allows you to export such data into several different formats that can be used by other applications. Some of these formats include, but are not limited to, Excel files, Dbase files, Word documents, and others.

In order to accomplish this, the user must access the ‘Database Window’ (refer to section ‘Getting into Access’ in this user manual). From that window select the Tables section and the desired table that needs to be exported. Once selected, click on the Export option of the FILE menu. This will present you with the basic window dialog screen that allows you to select the name and the file type needed for your export.

## Additional Support

More detailed information regarding SIDS and the use of the SUIDI Reporting Form may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/sids>.