|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Title**: | NOTIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE AND DECLINING OF A CASE | | **Policy #** | | I.1.02 |
| **Division:** | Investigation, Pathology | | **Page:** | | Page 1 of 2 |
| **Coroner Signature:** | |  | **NAME Reference:** | | B1a,B1b,B1c,B3c, | |
| **Approved/Revised Date:** | | **02-20-2024** | **IACME Reference:** | | A5g,A5j,A6e,B1a,B1c | |

**POLICY:**

The Ada County Coroner’s Office (ACCO) is authorized to provide investigative inquiry into all deaths occurring in the geographical boundaries of Ada County, and within the criteria set under Idaho Code §19-4301.

All deaths reported to the ACCO shall be thoroughly investigated to determine jurisdiction. To facilitate death notification and investigation, a medicolegal death investigator shall be available twenty-four (24) hours a day to receive and respond to calls for service.

**PROCEDURE**:

1. **Notification**
   1. Deaths should be reported to the ACCO immediately in order to determine jurisdiction, and to facilitate the investigation.
   2. Deaths may be reported to the ACCO by law enforcement, medical personnel, assisted living centers, organ/tissue procurement agencies, members of the funeral industry, etc.
   3. The following types of deaths are reportable and must be investigated:
      1. Of criminal violence
      2. By accident
      3. By suicide
      4. Suddenly, when in apparent good health
      5. Unattended by a practicing physician or other recognized practitioner
      6. In any prison or penal institution
      7. In police custody
      8. In any suspicious or unusual circumstance
      9. By criminal abortion
      10. By poison
      11. By disease, constituting a threat to public health
      12. By disease, injury, or toxic agent resulting from employment
2. **Accepting a case**
   1. Acceptance of jurisdiction indicates that the ACCO will assume responsibility for signing the death certificate.
   2. The Investigator may leave the jurisdiction decision as Pending until case circumstances are reviewed by a forensic pathologist.
   3. Questions regarding jurisdiction shall be directed to the Investigation Supervisor and/or on-call Senior Deputy.
3. **Declining a case**
   1. Declining jurisdiction indicates that the attending physician will assume responsibility for signing the death certificate.
   2. A case may be declined when the cause and manner of death are established to a reasonable degree of medical certainty through investigation, consultation, and/or history review, thus negating the necessity for a postmortem examination.
   3. Declining jurisdiction from the scene:
      1. Should the scene investigation reveal that the death does not come under the jurisdiction of the ACCO, the decedent is positively identified, legal next of kin/personal representative has been notified, and there is a physician who is able to provide medical history and will certify the death.
4. **Other Circumstances**
   1. Notification Through Incorrect Death Certification
      1. Death notification through Incorrect Death Certification occurs when the notification of an ACCO jurisdictional death has been discovered upon review of a cremation authorization, and discovery of a physician certification/jurisdiction discrepancy.
      2. The ACCO will assume responsibility for signing the death certificate as appropriate.
   2. Backwards Cases
      1. A Backwards Case indicates the ACCO was not immediately notified of a jurisdictional death occurring.
      2. Upon notification, an Investigator shall notify legal next of kin/personal representative of ACCO involvement and ensure the notification of death to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
      3. The death investigation may be subject to complications relating to the time delay in notification.