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|  | **Title**: | IDENTIFICATION | | **Policy #** | | I.3.01 |
| **Division:** | Investigation, Pathology, Forensic | | **Page:** | | Page 1 of 3 |
| **Coroner Signature:** | |  | **NAME Reference:** | | B4a,B4c,B4j,C1j,C6k | |
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**POLICY**:

The Ada County Coroner’s Office (ACCO) makes every effort to definitively identify all decedents whose deaths are under the jurisdiction of the Ada County Coroner. The Investigation, Pathology, and Forensic Divisions work collaboratively to definitively identify all decedents.

**PROCEDURE**:

The Ada County Coroner, or designee, in consultation with the forensic pathologist, shall make final determination of definitive identification.

All decedents under ACCO jurisdiction are considered tentatively identified until the identification is confirmed by one of the methods listed below.

All identification methods, and reports, confirmatory or otherwise, shall be documented in the ACCO case management system.

1. **Visual Identification**
   1. When the decedent is viewable with no advanced decomposition effects, and no extensive disfiguring facial trauma, facial identification shall be made by the on-scene Investigator utilizing:
      1. Government issued identification
      2. Photo identification
      3. Family, close friend, and/or medical staff/law enforcement recognition
   2. When on-scene facial identification is unattainable, the decedent shall be transported to the ACCO for further identification procedures.
      1. Distinguishable features (i.e. tattoos, scars, birthmarks) may be considered for identification confirmation.
2. **Fingerprint Comparison**
   1. When the condition of the decedent allows for fingerprint analysis, fingerprints shall be captured and documented by the Forensic Division, and/or the investigating law enforcement agency.
   2. Fingerprints shall be submitted for comparison by the Forensic Division to a forensic laboratory following standard operating procedure, and in accordance with ACCO Policy: *Support Services*.
   3. All report(s) will be uploaded into the ACCO case management system.
   4. A determination shall be made whether or not to pursue additional identification measures.
3. **Radiograph Comparison**
   1. The Investigation Division shall obtain antemortem radiograph records, and documentation, when available, for comparative analysis.
   2. Postmortem radiographs and documentation shall be completed by the Forensic Division when the condition of the decedent permits.
   3. The forensic pathologist and/or requested forensic specialist(s), shall review both antemortem and postmortem radiographs for identification confirmation.
   4. Forensic specialist support shall be in accordance with ACCO Policy: *Support Services*.
   5. All report(s) will be uploaded into the ACCO case management system.
   6. A determination shall be made whether or not to pursue additional identification measures.
4. **Odonatological Comparison**
   1. The Investigation Division shall obtain antemortem dental radiograph records, and documentation, when available, for comparative analysis.
   2. Postmortem dental radiographs, examination, charts, and documentation shall be completed by a forensic odontologist, along with Forensic Division support.
   3. Forensic odontologist assistance shall be in accordance with ACCO Policy: *Support Services*.
   4. All report(s) will be uploaded into the ACCO case management system.
   5. A determination shall be made whether or not to pursue additional identification measures.
5. **DNA Analysis**

DNA analysis for identification confirmation shall include the appropriate and available method of analysis to include: direct reference, family reference, and/or forensic genetic genealogy.

* 1. Direct reference – DNA comparison of decedent remains, and that of a personal item (i.e., toothbrush, razor, hairbrush, etc.).
  2. Family reference – DNA comparison of decedent remains, and that of a biological relative (Family Reference Sample).
     1. Direct and family reference samples shall be collected by the Forensic Division, or a law enforcement agency, following established operating procedure. All appropriate documentation shall be completed and added into the ACCO case management system.
     2. Decedent samples shall be collected by the Forensic Division following established operating procedure. All appropriate documentation shall be completed and added into the ACCO case management system.
     3. Reference samples shall be submitted to the forensic laboratory together, by the Forensic Division, following established operating procedure and including proper documentation.
  3. Forensic genetic genealogy – DNA comparison of decedent samples against the genetic profiles of potential familial relationships.
  4. The forensic laboratory analyzing the samples, shall be in accordance with ACCO Policy: *Support Services*.
  5. All report(s) will be uploaded into the ACCO case management system.
  6. A determination shall be made whether or not to pursue additional identification measures.

1. **Circumstantial Identification**
   1. In the absence of a crime, and when a decedent cannot be positively identified through visual identification, fingerprint comparison, radiograph comparison, odonatological comparison, or DNA analysis; a circumstantial identification may be considered.
   2. Circumstantial identification shall be at the discretion and direction of the Ada County Coroner, or designee, and in consultation with the forensic pathologist.
2. **Unidentified**
   1. When definitive identification cannot be confirmed after exhausting all efforts, a DNA specimen(s) shall be retained indefinitely at the ACCO for future identification efforts.
   2. The case may be turned over to the Ada County Public Administrator for review and burial.
   3. DNA documentation shall be submitted, in collaboration with law enforcement support, into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) database.
   4. A case shall be opened in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS) database, entering all known demographic information, distinguishing features, and identification photographs.