|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Title**: | CHILD DEATH INVESTIGATION | | **Policy #** | | I.2.02 |
| **Division:** | Investigation | | **Page:** | | Page 1 of 3 |
| **Coroner Signature:** | |  | **NAME Reference:** | | B3i | |
| **Approved/Revised Date:** | | **02-20-2024** | **IACME Reference:** | | B1d,B1e,B1f,B1g, B1h,B1i | |



**POLICY**:

All stillbirth, infant, and child deaths reported to the Ada County Coroner’s Office (ACCO) shall be thoroughly investigated by a medicolegal death investigator to determine jurisdiction, and for those deaths which fall under the jurisdiction of the Ada County Coroner, to aid in the certification of the cause and manner of death. The ACCO shall investigate child deaths with great sensitivity, careful scrutiny, and in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Sudden Unexpected Infant death Investigation guidelines.

**PROCEDURE**:

The term stillbirth shall apply to the death of a fetus from twenty (20) weeks gestation until before or during delivery. The term infant shall apply from birth to twelve (12) months of age, and the term child shall apply from twelve (12) months of age to eighteen (18) years old.

1. **Stillbirth**
   1. The Investigator shall notify the Investigation Supervisor/on-call Senior Deputy of any trauma/accident.
   2. The Investigator shall follow ACCO standard operating procedure for hospital communication and medical history review, prior to the determination of non-jurisdictional release.
2. **Infant**
   1. The Investigator shall:
      1. Complete the current *Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Investigation Reporting Form (SUIDIRF)* developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
      2. Photograph the scene, decedent, bedding, and any formula found on scene.
      3. Complete a full infant investigation in accordance with ACCO standard operating procedure.
      4. Allow family to hold and/or touch the infant if no suspicious activity is suspected.
      5. Notify the Investigation Supervisor if any suspicious activity is suspected.
      6. Consult with the Investigation Supervisor/on-call Senior Deputy regarding any questions.
      7. Notify the next of kin as more information becomes available, and upon determination of the cause and manner of death.
   2. Bedding
      1. Shall be documented and photographed by the Investigator and uploaded into the ACCO case management system.
      2. Items of evidence may be collected by the investigating law enforcement agency.
         1. At the request of the forensic pathologist, the Investigator may collect items of evidence for transportation to the ACCO.
         2. During the postmortem examination, the forensic pathologist may request any items of evidence collected by the investigating law enforcement agency to be brought to the ACCO for examination.
            1. Evidence shall be returned at the completion of the examination.
      3. Personal effects not retained as evidence shall be released with the decedent for final disposition upon completion of the postmortem examination.
   3. Doll Reenactments
      1. Shall be completed on all infant cases:
         1. When possible, and within twenty-four (24) hours.
         2. To include the individual(s) present prior to death, demonstrating placement of the decedent prior to being found deceased, using the reenactment doll.
         3. To include a “last seen alive” placement, using the reenactment doll, if one differs from Section 2.c.i.2 of this Policy.
         4. To include the individual(s) present when the infant was found deceased, demonstrating how the infant was found, using the reenactment doll.
         5. In collaboration with the investigating law enforcement agency.
      2. Shall be photographed and/or videotaped by the Investigator and uploaded into the ACCO case management system.
      3. For deaths occurring in a hospital, the Investigator shall investigate the last known alive location, utilizing a reenactment doll with the individual(s) present at the time of death.
   4. Memorial keepsakes will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Child**
   1. The Investigator, upon initial notification, shall notify the Investigation Supervisor/on-call Senior Deputy.
      1. The Investigation Supervisor/on-call Senior Deputy shall determine if Coroner/Chief Deputy notification is necessary, depending upon case circumstances.
   2. All potential cases of non-jurisdictional release will be reviewed and approved by the Coroner, Chief Deputy, forensic pathologist, Investigation Supervisor, or on-call Senior Deputy.
   3. For deaths deemed suspicious, or without medical significance, all appropriate agencies shall be notified.
   4. The Investigator shall allow the family to hold and/or touch the child pending no suspicious activity is suspected.
      1. Questions will be directed to the Investigation Supervisor/on-call Senior Deputy.
   5. Investigation Division staff shall contact the appropriate agencies for case completion.
4. **Hospital Deaths**
   1. The Investigator shall:
      1. Respond to the hospital, when the body was removed from the scene and taken to the hospital.
         1. Complete a full investigation in accordance with ACCO standard operating procedure.
      2. Investigate the scene of death, i.e., where the body was found prior to being taken to the hospital.
         1. With exception given to a prolonged delay in death at the hospital, and the Investigator, on-call forensic pathologist, and investigating law enforcement agency in agreement that a scene investigation would not provide valuable forensic information.