

Charleston County Coroner's Office Policy #3

Title: Body And Bone Receiving and Releasing

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3.1 POLICY

It is the responsibility of all employees and contracted personnel to handle all decedents, remains, personal effects, and evidence in the autopsy rooms and morgue with reverence and professionalism at all times. All custody and movement of decedents will be documented from the time of receipt to the decedent's release from Coroner's Office custody. Computerized records will be held indefinitely. Only authorized personnel shall have access to the morgue/autopsy suite.

3.2 ACCESS TO MORGUE/AUTOPSY SUITE

1. Access to the autopsy suite is restricted to authorized personnel who include: The Coroner, Chief Deputy, all Deputy Coroners, forensic staff, other designated employees, contracted forensic examiners (Anthropologist, Odontologist, Pathologist etc.) contracted transportation staff, and others as approved by the Coroner or Chief Deputy.

2. Anyone else entering the morgue/autopsy area shall be under escort from an authorized Coroner's Office employee to include transportation staff for funeral homes, organ procurement representatives, law enforcement representatives, and facility contract employees.

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3. Access “FOB” devices will be provided only to authorized personnel and at the discretion of the Coroner or Chief Deputy. FOB devices issued to authorized personnel shall not be given or loaned to any other individual.
4. All bodies, bones, and cremains shall enter the Coroner’s Office through the side door under the sally port.

3.3 BODY RECEIVING

1. The access gate code will only be provided to authorized personnel. Others requiring access to the Sally Port area will need to request that the gate be opened by a staff member.
2. Access to the building is limited to those individuals who are provided a FOB/Key and the security code to enter the building. All others will need to request access to the building by a representative of the coroner’s staff.
3. Upon the arrival of a body at the Coroner’s Office facility, the receipt of the body shall be memorialized in the appropriate logbook and on the CCCO Body Tracking Document by the transporter and the receiving staff member.
4. The logbook entry shall be completed in its entirety.
5. The CCCO Body Tracking Document (top half) shall be completed in its entirety and signed by both the transporter and receiving representative.
6. The stretcher and body shall be weighed on the floor scale and weight noted on the document.
7. The receiving Coroner’s representative (Coroner, Chief Deputy Coroner, Deputy Coroner, or the Forensic staff) shall check that the body bag lock

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is properly secured; check the bag for signs of tampering or leakage; check the BRT information (if available) for accuracy including the body bag lock number. If no body bag lock is located on the bag, then the receiving Deputy shall add one as well as document and photograph the lock number.

8. Personal effects inventory sheet (if applicable) and other documentation received with the body shall be left in the box outside the morgue in the designated location.
9. If delivery is made after hours by the transportation service, the delivering person(s) shall complete the log and the Body Tracking Document and leave the form in the box outside the morgue.
10. The body shall then be moved onto a tray in the morgue.
11. Upon leaving the autopsy suite, the stretcher without the body shall be weighed and the weight documented on the weight out area.
12. Every business day, a designated employee (usually the Forensic staff) shall check the morgue for deliveries and ensure all deliveries have body bag locks and check the bag for signs of tampering or leakage. The Body Tracking Document shall be checked and ensure the appropriate MDI log entry in the Body Tracking section. The MDI case number shall be documented on the Body Tracking Document. Ensure the PE inventory sheet (if applicable) has been scanned in MDI and uploaded to the documents section in MDI for the case. Any discrepancies shall be brought to the attention of the Supervisor of Forensics or Chief Deputy Coroner.

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3.4 BODY TRACKING

1. All bodies received for autopsy in the Coroner's Office morgue shall be fingerprinted, when possible, based on the condition of the decedent. When the condition of the fingers are good enough to print, the MorphoID unit shall be used to try to scientifically identify the decedent. If there is a positive "Hit", the evidence technician should be notified so the report can be downloaded from the unit. If there is not a positive hit on the MorphoID unit, postmortem ten-print ink cards shall be obtained and secured in the evidence room. If there is doubt regarding the identity of the decedent, those inked prints shall be submitted to law enforcement by the case Deputy Coroner for analysis if this has not already been accomplished. In most cases, the Coroner/Deputy Coroner may feel comfortable with positive identification using photo identification and verification from family and friends. However, when a body is decomposed, skeletonized, burned, traumatized or there is a question as to the decedent's identity, a different scientific method should be used. Please refer to the Decedent Identification Policy for further information.
2. Barcode labels shall be printed from MDILog, and these labels are used to identify forms, personal effects, fingerprint cards, and all samples obtained during an external examination or autopsy.
3. The MDILog case number will be the number used to identify all cases, external exams, autopsies, and evidence tracking.

3.5 BODY RELEASE

1. The release of a body shall be memorialized in the logbook, on the CCCO Body Tracking Document, and in the MDILog Body Tracking section for a case.
2. Bodies will only be released during normal business hours (M-F 8:30 am-4:30 pm) by the Coroner, Chief Deputy, case Deputy Coroner, or the

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Forensic staff unless prearranged and with the approval of the Coroner or Chief Deputy.

3. If a printed Burial, Removal, Transport Permit accompanies the body when the decedent was transported to the office, (if not in electronic format) Staff shall have the transport person fill in the funeral home name and sign the bottom of the form. Scan the BRT to our records and provide the BRT to the transporter. Provide a signed copy of the personal effects inventory transfer sheet from MDILog and/or Tracker.
4. The releasing employee shall be responsible to ensure that the correct body is being released to the correct funeral home or cremation service. The releasing party shall confirm the name of the decedent, the body bag lock, and the personal effects inventory list (if applicable) are correct. This individual shall check Tracker to determine if other PE are available and ready for release. Should the receiving person ask that the bag be opened to confirm identity, the releasing employee shall break the body bag lock and confirm the name on the identification band.
5. The receiving and releasing individuals shall sign the Body Tracking Document and ensure the logbook is complete. The releasing individual shall ensure that all PE are released with the body, as indicated, and then scan all documents to MDILog.
6. After the release of the body, the used morgue tray shall be properly sanitized.

3.6 RECEIVING, TRACKING AND RELEASING BONES

1. Upon arrival of a bone or more than one bone at the Coroner's Office facility, which is a CCCO case, the receipt of the bone(s) shall be

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memorialized with complete entries in the logbook and on the CCCO Body Tracking Document.

2. The case Deputy Coroner shall make the initial entry into MDILog. The additional form "Anthropology" should be added to the case and a communication log message added to tagging and notifying the Forensic Anthropologist that the bone is in our facility.
3. If the bone is being received from an agency outside of Charleston County, the Forensic Anthropologist will make the initial MDILog entry; however, the receiving Deputy Coroner/Forensic staff shall make the logbook entry and fill out the CCCO Body Tracking Document.
4. Dry bones shall be stored in the right-side autopsy suite on a table or in the locked cabinet. The packaging, preferably a brown paper bag, shall be labeled with the coroner's office case number.
5. The CCCO Body Tracking Document shall always accompany dry bone(s) while in the building. Any bone(s) with flesh shall be kept in the morgue cooler in a container or bio-bag marked with the case number and the CCCO Body Tracking Document shall be kept in the box outside the morgue in the hallway.
6. After examination by the Forensic Anthropologist or other contracted doctors, human bones may be transferred to the evidence room, police agencies, the MUSC morgue, or other coroners at the discretion of the case Deputy Coroner, Forensic anthropologist, another contracted doctor or the Coroner. Bones stored in our evidence room shall be entered into the Tracker system in accordance with the Property and Evidence Policy. The CCCO Body Tracking Document should reflect that determination and transfer. Utilize MDILog to facilitate the transfer by the

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Property/Evidence section. Check “other” and enter a description of the bone(s). Then select “Create Release Form” and release per the form including the “Photo ID” entry.

7. Non-human bones may be transferred to the Forensic Anthropologist as part of a teaching collection or disposed. The CCCO Body Tracking Document should reflect that determination.