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| Policy: CASE NOTIFICATION | **Union County Coroner Office** |

CASE NOTIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE AND RELEASE

The Union County Coroner Office should be notified of the following deaths occurring within the County:

1. From disease which may be hazardous or contagious or which may constitute a threat to the health of the public.

2. From external violence (trauma), an unexplained cause or suspicious circumstances a. Trauma can be as simple as a fall to the more profound (e.g. fractures)

b. Elapsed time from occurrence of trauma may be from immediate too years

3. Where attending physician is unable to certify the cause of death

4. From thermal, chemical or radiation injury

5. From criminal abortion

6. While in the custody of law enforcement or while incarcerated in a public institution

7. When the death was sudden and happened to a person who was in good health

8. From an industrial accident or any death suspected to be involved with decedent’s occupation

9. When death occurs less than 24 hours after admission to the hospital

10. When a death occurs after any invasive procedure. For example:

a. Where the procedure being performed is considered by others in the profession to be of relatively low risk and the patient dies unexpectedly

b. Where the death of the patient occurs during the performance of a procedure or during the immediate postoperative period and the patient’s condition was not to be life threatening prior to the initiation of the procedure

11. Any death suspected to be due to alcohol intoxication or the result of exposure to drugs or toxic agents

12. Any death due to neglect or suspected neglect

13. Any stillbirth of 20 or more week’s gestational age unattended by a physician

14. Any maternal death to include death of a pregnant woman regardless of the length of the pregnancy

15. Any death of an infant or child where the medical history has not established a significant pre-existing condition

16. All children under the age of two

The Union County Coroner Office shall accept notification from any person who has become aware of a death that might fall under the jurisdiction of the Office. The investigator shall notify the proper law enforcement agency and start a preliminary investigation from the information that was reported. The Union County Coroner Office shall investigate the circumstances surrounding any death believed to have occurred in the county.

The Union County Coroner Office will investigate deaths reported to the Office that meet the criteria listed above.

If a death reported to the Union County Coroner Office fails to meet the above criteria, jurisdiction may be declined. When jurisdiction is declined, the investigator will document this as part of the case file. In all cases reported to the office, regardless of whether jurisdiction is declined or accepted, the name, date of death and the investigators name, and any associated documentation will be recorded and retained as part of the case file.

HOSPICE DEATHS

A death of a hospice patient generally does not occur as an unexpected death and as such, hospice care providers are only required to report the death of a hospice patient to the office if the primary care physician of a hospice patient will not sign the death certificate of their patient or if the death of a hospice patient by what is believed to be any manner other than natural will be reported to the Union County Coroner Office and shall be investigated by an investigator from this office.

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Investigators are not expected to conduct a scene investigation when the manner of death is consistent with the diagnosed terminal illness.