

## Charleston County Coroner's Office Policy #52

**Title:** Facility Security

**Page:** 1 of 3

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**Updated:**

**Reviewed:**

**Authorized By:** Bobbi Jo O'Neal, Coroner

### 52.1 POLICY

This policy specifies facility security protocols for employee, contractor, and visitor access to various areas of the Charleston County Coroner's Office buildings. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and secure workplace for employees; safeguard the process of medicolegal death investigation, and to protect the confidentiality of the casework and the integrity of evidentiary material.

### 52.2 OVERVIEW

1. The public entrance to the Coroner's Office is guarded by an armed guard when the office is open for business. Access through the public entrance is limited by a locked door and door access is controlled by the security guard. The building is equipped with a standard burglar alarm system with door sensors and motion detectors. The alarm system is set when the building is unoccupied. In addition, there are numerous security cameras located inside and outside the facility. Several controlled access doors separate the lobby, administrative offices, and autopsy suites from the public/lobby area. Authorized personnel are issued fobs to access the building and controlled spaces. In general, the Administrator or other designee for the Coroner's Office shall oversee any facility security issues as well as those personnel in the performance of their duties.

2. A portion of the parking lot is accessible to the public. A portion of the parking lot that houses vehicle access to the rear morgue/autopsy entrance is secured with a 6' chain

## #52 Facility Security

link fence topped with barbed wire. The chain link is obscured by black outdoor fabric. Access to the fenced-in area of the parking lot is obtained via a motorized gate controlled by FOB/keypad access.

3. All equipment or morgue trailers are locked when not in use.
4. At no time will explosives, flammables, corrosive materials, dangerous chemicals, unknown biological specimens, radioactive materials, or other dangerous items be brought to the Coroner's Office facility. Such items should be secured by qualified law enforcement personnel or other government personnel.

### 52.3 ACCESS TO THE CORONER'S OFFICE

1. All part-time and full-time regular employees of the Office shall be issued an access FOB device at the discretion of the Chief Deputy or Coroner. FOBs shall not be switched between employees or provided to other employees for use. Only designated employees shall have access to the property and evidence room.
2. The Charleston County Building Construction and Maintenance Manager and the Facilities Technical Services Manager may be issued FOB access to the Coroner's Office at the discretion of the Chief Deputy or Coroner for the performance of their duties.
3. The contracted decedent transport vendor's employees may be issued FOB access to the area behind the gate and the door leading to the morgue/autopsy end of the building at the discretion of the Chief Deputy or Coroner.
4. The contracted housekeeping vendor employee shall be issued a general spaces access FOB in exchange for their identification with the Administrator daily. This vendor is not allowed access to the property and evidence area or the autopsy/morgue area without an escort.
5. A visitor is any individual that is not employed by the Coroner's Office or that fits into any of the above scenarios.

## #52 Facility Security

- 1) Persons entering the building as a visitor shall sign in and out at the front desk and shall check in with the security guard.
- 2) Visitors must have valid national, state, or international identification (i.e. driver's license, Passport) The sign-in sheets can be used to determine the visitor's presence in the building during an emergency.
- 3) All visitors shall be escorted by staff if they access areas beyond the lobby/restrooms.
- 4) Visitors, including funeral home staff and law enforcement personnel, must wait in the first-floor lobby until an employee escorts them to the appropriate destination.

6. Anyone observing a person(s) without an employee escort must direct them to the first-floor lobby security desk and inform the guard. Should the person(s) refuse to comply, employees must immediately notify the security guard or North Charleston Police.

7. Upon termination, an employee must return the FOB device to the Chief Deputy. Any lost FOB or keys to the building must be immediately reported to their supervisor and the Chief Deputy.

8. Visitors are prohibited from admittance into the Coroner's Office building after normal business hours. With prior authorization from the Chief Deputy or the Coroner, after-hour admittance to groups or individuals for official purposes is allowed. An example would be the release of a body to a mortuary after hours under extreme circumstances.

### 52.4 SECURED DOORS

1. All secured doorways and the gate to the parking lot (entrances/exits with controlled FOB readers) must always remain closed unless being utilized. Secure doors or the gate should not be left or propped open for periods of time unless for necessary business and upon notification to the security guard.

## #52 Facility Security

2. The security guard or Administrative Assistant/front desk person may at their discretion open the gate or the front door to allow access for needed services or decedent transport vehicles.