

Charleston County Coroner's Office Policy #5
Title: Case Reporting, Documentation and Closure Page: 1 of 3
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5.1 POLICY

Some of the aspects of professional death investigation involve timely investigative progress; accurate collection of information; clear, concise communication, and oversight of case progression. To facilitate better global case management, the following procedures and times for completion should be adhered to as closely as possible.

5.2 PROCEDURE

1. A case number shall be created in MDILog as soon as possible and prior to the end of the 'on duty' shift for all reported deaths. When deaths are reported to our office and it is determined that the decedent is not in the Charleston County Coroner's Office jurisdiction or the death occurred in another county, a "Wrong County" case number will be created in MDILog and basic information regarding the decedent and the circumstances shall be memorialized appropriately in MDILog.

2. When a cremation permit is requested by a funeral home and the decedent's death is not being investigated, a "Cremation" or "Cremation-Fetal" case number will be created in MDILog to include basic information regarding the decedent. The MDILog entry should include a scan of the death certificate or fetal-related paperwork, to include the Fetal Death Cremation Letter.

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3. When a full investigation is underway, the case Deputy Coroner shall bring to a Supervisor's attention any case with extenuating circumstances causing a delay in determining decedent identity, notification of the next-of-kin, the determination of cause and/or manner of death or other delays in the progression of the death investigation. The target date for case closure is 3 months after inception. All natural deaths can be closed upon indication of the Coroner/Deputy Coroner. All non-natural death cases will be reviewed by either the Coroner, the Chief Deputy Coroner, or the Investigations Supervisor. Deputy Coroners in training will have all-natural death cases reviewed by a supervisor before case closure until determined otherwise.

5.3 CASE FOLLOW-UP STEPS WITH TIME FRAMES

1. The Deputy will promptly create a case in MDILog.
2. Coroner's Face Sheet and BRT (once created and sent electronically) are uploaded documents in MDILog.
3. The Coroner's Report narrative must be written in a timely manner.
4. Death Certificate signed or instructions provided for the same within 48 hours or the next office day.
5. The body is released generally within 36 hours after death.
6. EMS report, if applicable obtained when first available.
7. Police reports, if applicable obtained when available.
8. Medical records obtained when necessary within 72 hours of death.
9. Autopsy and toxicology or external examination are scheduled timely if indicated.
10. Follow-up on toxicology report no later than six weeks. Autopsy report 6-8 weeks.
11. Case closed and/or sent for review within 3 months of inception.

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5.4 DOCUMENTS IN MDI LOG

Documents in a case record may include some or all of the following and other pertinent documents which may not be listed:

1. Face sheet and notes.
2. Copy of Death Certificate (pending and/or final).
3. Reports regarding identification (odontology report, anthropology report, fingerprint results, DNA results, etc.).
4. Suicide note (if applicable).
5. Chain of custody form for personal effects or evidence.
6. FOIA, subpoenas, and other requests.
7. Medical records
8. Miscellaneous items –Accurint report, handwritten notes, newspaper articles, obituary.
9. BRT
10. Scene, autopsy, law enforcement, follow-up photographs or videos.
11. Scan of a decedent's driver's license or government-issued ID card.
12. Autopsy photos for all homicides and others as indicated.
13. Others as indicated by each case.