

SECTION 5 - REPORTING DEATHS

I. REPORTING DEATHS-GENERAL

When any person comes to a sudden, unexpected death or is found dead and the cause of death is unknown, anyone who becomes aware of the death shall report it immediately to the law enforcement authorities. The public official so notified shall in turn notify either, or both, the appropriate law enforcement authorities or the Shelby County Coroner's Office. The Coroner's Office shall then view and take legal custody of the body. It is unlawful to willfully and without good cause neglect or refuse to report a death to law enforcement authorities or to willfully and unnecessarily touch, remove or disturb any dead body required by law to be reported to the Shelby County Coroner's Office. The Coroner's mission is to satisfy the legal requirements of the office in an expeditious manner to determine the cause and manner of death of persons who have died suddenly or unexpectedly. Those deaths to be reported to the Shelby County Coroner's Office include all deaths occurring in Shelby County as outlined below regardless of where or when the initial injuring event occurred. In addition, all deaths as outlined below shall be reported that occurred outside of Shelby County but the initiating injuring event occurred in Shelby County.

1. From disease which may be hazardous or contagious or which may constitute a threat to the health of the general public
2. From external violence, an unexplained cause, or under suspicious circumstances
3. Where no physician is in attendance, or where, though in attendance, the 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 officials 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 the decedent's occupation
9. When death occurs in a hospital less than 24 hours after arrival to a hospital or after any invasive procedure
10. Any death suspected to be due to alcohol intoxication or the result of exposure to drugs or toxic agents, regardless of time between initial injury and death. This includes hospital or nursing care facility deaths.

11. Any death due to neglect or suspected neglect
12. Any stillbirth of 20 or more weeks gestational age unattended by a physician
13. Any maternal death to include death of a pregnant woman regardless of the length of the pregnancy, and up to six weeks (or one year) post-delivery, even where the cause of death is unrelated to the pregnancy
14. Any death of an infant or child where the medical history has not established a significant pre-existing condition.

II. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING DEATH

No matter what the situation might be, personnel from the Shelby County Coroner's Office are always available to respond to a call or be accessible for a family that has a question or needs help. To notify the Shelby County Coroner's Office of a death, the Deputy Coroner can be reached at 205-439-6919. The Shelby County Coroner's Office will respond, either by phone or to the scene and decide if the death warrants further investigation. If the Coroner's Office decides to accept jurisdiction in the case, the Coroner's Office will take custody of the body. In conjunction with coverage of Shelby County, the office works in conjunction with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and the 18th Judicial Circuit.