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| **POLICY: BODY RECEIVING AND RELEASE PROCEDURES FROM MORGUE** | Union County Coroner Office |

To ensure the chain of custody of all decedents is documented and all decedents are released to authorized funeral directors and/or transporters.

1. Labeling of the body and personal effects
   1. Union County Coroner’s Office will ensure the body is placed in a zippered body containment bag and that the body has an identification label bearing the decedent’s name, Time of Death, Day of Death, Date of Birth, and SSN. If the name of the decedent is unknown or the body requires positive identification then the body shall be designated as “John Doe unidentified male”, “Jane Doe unidentified female”, or “unidentified human remains”. The label shall be affixed to a readily accessible body part and that an identification label bearing the decedent’s name is affixed to the zipper of the body bag.
   2. The personal effects discovered with the body will be documented on the Investigative/Evidence form along with photographs of each item and the form will be marked to indicate the disposition of each item (released with body or retained for evidence or released to N.O.K).
   3. The personal effects will be placed in an appropriate evidence bag labeled with the decedent’s name and location where found and placed inside the body bag with the body, typically in the region of the chest. (If a personal effect is to be released and is not in a bag with other personal effects, this must be noted on the Investigative/Evidence form.)
2. An authorized member of Union County Coroner Office or a member of Memorial Health Security must be present to open the locked morgue cooler to release a body to a funeral home or body transporter. A member of the Union County Coroner Office or security should accompany the funeral home representative/body transporter always while inside the secured cooler/refrigerator area.
3. The Morgue Intake/Release Log will be used to document the receipt of all decedents placed in refrigerated storage.
4. The **Intake** section of the log will include the following information:
   1. Record the name of the deceased
   2. Date and time of morgue placement
   3. County of Death
   4. Name of person transporting the decedent to the morgue
      1. Includes deaths of Hospital patients
   5. Name of Associate assisting with intake procedure
      1. ER Physician, Nurses, Or Hospital Staff
      2. Union County Coroner Office/Memorial Health Security Associate
5. Associates assisting with the intake process will verify the following:
   1. An appropriate name tag is attached to the exterior of the body bag.
      1. Verify the name on the body bag tag coincides with the name on the Intake log.
   2. When the body is received as a Coroner case, a numbered lock seal device is securely attached to the body bag for bodies received from outside Memorial Hospital.
   3. Placement of the body in the storage rack system allows for visual inspection of the body bag tag at the head of the body.
6. Releasing a decedent to the appropriately authorized funeral director and/or transporter requires due diligence on the part of any Associate.
7. An authorized member of Union County Coroner Office or a member of Memorial Health Security must be present to open the locked morgue cooler to release a body to a funeral home or body transporter. A member of the Union County Coroner Office or security should accompany the funeral home representative/body transporter always while inside the secured cooler/refrigerator area.
   1. Persons serving in the following capacity may be assigned to release a body:
      1. Memorial Health Security Associate
      2. Union County Coroner Office
8. Authorized Associates will adhere to the following procedures when releasing a body from the morgue.
   1. Determine the name of the deceased person the transporter is receiving
   2. Locate the designated decedent in the morgue cooler
      1. Verify the name on the body bag tag coincides with the name provided by the transporter.
      2. Verify the name on the Personal Effects bag if one is present to the body bag tag.
      3. Verify the assigned investigator has signed the **Release Authorization** section of the Morgue Log.
      4. If a **HOLD** tag is attached to the body bag do not release the body.
         1. Inform the transporter the decedent may not be released until the assigned investigator has authorized the release and contact the Union County Coroner Office for further instructions.
   3. Verify the identification tag on the body and personal effects bag.
      1. Authorized Associates will ensure the name tag on the body coincides with the name on the exterior of the body bag, Along with the Personal Effects bag. Confirm this with the name provided by the transporter
         1. **Do not release the body if these items are not consistent and contact the Union County Coroner Office.**
      2. Security Officers should ensure the transporter opens the body bag and verifies the name identification tag inside the body bag.
      3. Verify personal effects are visible and attached to the chest of the body as appropriate.
9. The plastic bags (if any) containing the personal effects to be released with the body should be checked for the appropriate identification label and the funeral home representative/body transporter may check the contents of the bags to ensure the appropriate personal effects are with the body.
10. After the above steps are taken to ensure the appropriate body and personal effects are released, the Intake/release log located inside the morgue cooler will be signed (with date and time) by the staff member or security member releasing the body and the funeral home representative/body transporter accepting custody.
11. By signing the Intake/release log located inside the morgue cooler the funeral home representative/body transporter assumes responsibility for the body and all documented personal effects from that time forward.
12. “Universal precautions” should be followed during the body release process.