**SECTION 17: PAPERLESS ELECTRONIC FILE STORAGE**

**GENERAL**

Effective July 1, 2013, all Union County Coroner case files shall be kept on the Union County computer system. No new hard copies shall be generated as of that date. Storage location is currently designated as the “P” Drive on the county system or equipment per county IT procedures.

The Coroner, Deputy Coroner or Coroner Investigator will prepare, at a minimum, a Report of Death on all cases. Other reports that may be prepared include the Medication Log, the Union County Coroner Media Release, and the Supplemental Report. These reports shall be created using an approved word processing or spreadsheet program. These reports shall be stored, at a minimum, on the “P” Drive “Private” Folder. The Coroner, Deputy Coroner, or Coroner Investigator may keep a copy of each item on the county-assigned personal computer.

In addition to the above-mentioned reports, the following documents may become part of the case file: Body Diagram, scene images, medical records or other supporting documents not specifically mentioned. These items shall be scanned into a portable document format (PDF), named in accordance with this section and stored in the associated case file.

**CREATE A FORENSIC FILE**

A Forensic Folder shall be created for every case that falls within the coroner’s jurisdiction. Those folders shall be created on the counties “P” Drive. The following is the procedure for creating a Forensic Folder on the “P” drive:

Create the forensic folder on the “P” Drive, “Private” Folder, “Case Files” in the appropriate yearly folder using the following format: The date pronounced dead MM-DD-YYYY First Name, Middle Initial, and Last Name.

Open the folder just created. Create new folders with the appropriate designation as follows:

Photographs within that folder

Coroner

Sheriff, Police, OSP, as appropriate

Autopsy if available

Medication

Other

Investigative Notes and Worksheets

Property Release Forms

Medical Records

Death Certificate, Supplemental Death Certificate

Autopsy and Coroner Report

Miscellaneous Reports

**R D S A N D**

**SECTION 18: RECORDS AND FEES**

**GENERAL**

Records documenting investigations and subsequent findings of those investigations of deaths reported to the Union County Coroner’s Office are prepared, stored and made available for public requests. The Union County Coroner’s Office is the sole record repository. All reports, investigative findings, images and any other material gathered during a death investigation shall be maintained within accordance of the guidelines in this section.

The information gathered during these investigations is compiled at public expense. Therefore, any person requesting specific reports or any information concerning the cause and manner of death may do so from the Union County Coroner’s Office and shall receive the reports after paying reproduction fee. See “FEES” at the end of this section.

Various reports are prepared to assist in determining cause and manner of death. The Report of Death is prepared by the Coroner Investigator assigned to the case. The coroner’s report is prepared by the coroner or deputy coroner. The autopsy report is prepared by the pathologist following a postmortem examination. The toxicology report is prepared by the toxicologist. The toxicology report reflects results of only those tests requested.

The following records are exempt from release in accordance with 313.10

(a) Preliminary autopsy and investigative notes and findings made by the coroner or by anyone acting under the coroner’s direction or supervision;

(b) Photographs of a decedent made by the coroner or by anyone acting under the coroner’s direction or supervision;

(c) Suicide notes;

(d) Medical and psychiatric records provided to the coroner, a deputy coroner, or a representative of the coroner or a deputy coroner under section [313.091](http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/313.091) of the Revised Code;

(e) Records of a deceased individual that are confidential law enforcement investigatory records as defined in section [149.43](http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/149.43) of the Revised Code;

(f) Laboratory reports generated from the analysis of physical evidence by the coroner’s laboratory that is discoverable under Criminal Rule 16.

There are exceptions that are addressed in this section such as, a journalist ORC 313.10(D) request to view items of the coroner’s record including pictures and suicide notes, the insurer of the decedent, ORC 313.10(E), and the surviving spouse and next of kin ORC313.10(C) should be carefully read and if there is any questionable request consult your prosecuting attorney.

Internal correspondence represented by reports, memoranda, opinions, photographs or other parts of a case file are protected by ORC313 and are released by subpoena or when authorized by the Union County Coroner. A reproduction fee may be assessed.

Records within case files obtained from other agencies, including, but not limited to, hospitals, mental health facilities, law enforcement agencies or physicians' records shall not be released by the Union County Coroner’s Office. Those documents must be requested from the primary source of the record.

**RETENTION**

All investigative files are maintained in accordance with the Union County Coroner’s Record Retention Schedule, and the Union County General Records Retention Schedule. Reports, images and test results prepared by or requested by the designated pathologist in fulfilling the agreement between Union County and the designated pathologist shall become property of the Union County Coroner’s Office.

Effective January 1, 2010, all reports shall be maintained electronically on the Union County computer system. Reports previously stored as hard copies shall be maintained at the Union County Archives, 128 South Main St Marysville, Ohio.

Microscopic slides and tissue blocks are held in perpetuity or until such time that deterioration renders them invalid. Fixed tissues are retained for 12 months. Toxicology samples are held 12 months. Destruction will occur at the end of the retention periods unless formal requests for continued preservation are received.

**FEES**

The primary next of kin may receive one copy of the Autopsy Report including the toxicology report at no charge. The primary care physician, the hospital where the death occurred, the law enforcement agency of record and the Prosecuting Attorney may receive one copy of the Autopsy Report and supporting documents at no charge. The Union County Coroner’s Office requests all copies of files to be sent electronically.

Any other agency or individual requesting an Autopsy Report may do so in writing and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee set forth below. Checks shall be made payable to the Union County Coroner.

Next of kin are discouraged from receiving any images. If next of kin are insistent on seeing scene or autopsy images, those interested parties should review the images in the presence of a Coroner Investigator and/or the pathologist who conducted the postmortem examination.

ORC 313.10(B) & ORC 149.43(B) 2013 Fee Schedule:

Autopsy Report with supporting documents to include toxicology report only via email................................... $1.00

Autopsy Report with supporting documents to include toxicology report only via USPS........................ $.25/page

Autopsy images via email.................................................................................................................................................... $1.00

Autopsy images via CD ROM or other portable storage device.................................................................$1.00

Other reports not listed may incur similar fees. Fees are subject to change without notice.