

## Charleston County Coroner's Office Policy #38

**Title:** Report Writing

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### 38.1 POLICY

A coroner's report will be completed for every case investigated by the Charleston County Coroner's Office. A coroner's report is a 'Fact Sheet' to include a narrative report of each death investigated by a Deputy Coroner. The narrative shall contain an accurate, clear, and concise description of the incident and actions of the Deputy.

### 38.2 PROCEDURE

1. The responding Deputy Coroner shall complete as much information as reasonable and/or possible in the following areas of MDILog (the online records management system): Case Information, Secondary Party, Location, Documentation, Pathology, and Worksheets.
2. A brief chronological description of the incident will be memorialized in the narrative section of the report and should include, but are not limited to, the following information where known/applicable:
  - a) Time and date Coroner's Office was notified of the death and name of notifying agency/individual
  - b) Name of law enforcement agency(s) if involved
  - c) Location of death, date or date range of death, and approximate time frame or known time of death
  - d) "Who" and "how" the death was witnessed/discovered
  - e) Name of decedent, age or age range, and method(s) of identification, if known

## Report Writing

- f) Last time known to be alive
- g) Circumstances of accident/incident leading to death and sources/witnesses of the provided information
- h) Description of the decedent as observed by Deputy
- i) The presence or lack of weapons at the scene
- j) Any reported statements made by the decedent prior to death (complaints/implications)
- k) Presence of or lack of suicide note when applicable
- l) Observations and actions of the Deputy on scene
- m) Transport of decedent by whom and to what location
- n) Efforts to notify NOK and/or lack of NOK information
- o) Medical history
- p) Autopsy/toxicology findings
- q) Cause and manner of death determination

3. All narratives shall be accurate, clear concise, and complete. Deputies shall check reports for spelling and grammatical errors. Remember that reports are public information. Use language in the report that is generally understood by all. Keep the report free of bias. Strive to be objective in reporting the circumstances of a death. Avoid presumptions, redundancy, and using words that bring unnecessary emotion into a report. The best practice for successful report writing is to take good field notes and photographs. Have field notes and photographs at hand when writing a narrative.