



## **Positive Identification Policy**

**Policy# 14-0627-3 Positive Identification Policy Total pages=3 Revised 11/21/2022**

**Purpose:** To have a standardized policy with procedures on how positive identification will be made on all decedents that fall under the jurisdiction of this office.

**Justification:** It is the responsibility of this office to ensure that the decedent's identity is accurate and confirmed prior to being released to a funeral home. The Forensic and Investigative staff will work together to positively identify decedents through the use of investigative and forensic standards.

### **Policy/Procedures:**

1. This office will use the resources available to ensure that a positive identification is made in a timely yet appropriate manner.
2. The following means will be used to establish a positive identification:

#### **A. Physical viewing:**

The investigator will have one of the following sign an Affidavit of Identification form:

1. at the location by a family member, long-time friend or co-worker of at least six months (no recent acquaintances). This includes landlords.
2. Medical or law enforcement personnel, if they have had direct contact with the decedent.

#### **B. Photograph.**

1. A photograph viewed by a family member or longtime friend if in the opinion of the investigator that the decedent resembles the decedent. (Photo ID's or postmortem photograph.)
2. The postmortem photograph must display the decedent's features and/or profile.

3. If there are injuries noted to the face/head, the investigator will take additional steps to ensure the quality and appropriateness of the photograph taken. Do not alter the injuries if suspected victim of crime.
4. If a digital camera is used, the Affidavit of Identification will list the photograph number.
5. If a law enforcement photograph from the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway is used, have the person making the identification sign and date the photo in addition to the Affidavit of Identification form.

**C. Fingerprint Comparison.**

1. A comparison will be made between postmortem fingerprints and an outside agency's ante mortem fingerprints by a qualified fingerprint examiner.
2. A signed document by the examiner will be placed in the case folder.

**D. Radiographs.**

1. If identification is going to be made by a x-ray comparison (either dental or body), the ante mortem x-rays will be obtained from a medical facility and/or physician's office by an investigator and transported or shipped overnight to qualified specialist for comparison
2. If identification is made using x-rays, the person making the identification will provide documentation and copies of x-rays used.
3. in extreme cases where dental x-rays are not available but recent dental charting is available; identification may be made using such charting as long as sufficient presumptive identification is available. This will be decided only by coroner.

**E. DNA Comparison.**

1. A comparison will be made between the decedent and known first degree relatives. The DNA testing will be conducted at an approved lab/agency and a report will be submitted from the agency that made the identification and retained in the decedent's file.

**F. Presumptive Identification.**

1. A decedent may be released to a funeral home for burial based on sufficient presumptive identification once appropriate DNA samples have been collected received by the approved lab/agency. This decision will be made only by the coroner.

**G. Unidentified Bodies.**

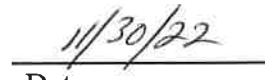
1. All unidentified bodies will be handled as described in the Ohio Revised Code 313.08
2. In addition information will be entered into the National Missing And Unidentified Persons (NAMUS) database.
3. Work with local law enforcement to have information entered into NCIC, the National Crime Information Center.
4. The unidentified case will remain open and active.
5. The body will be released to the township trustees as described in the Ohio Revised Code 9.15 for burial.

#### H. Homicides

1. All victims of homicides identity will be verified by either fingerprints, x-rays or DNA when possible.
3. If Positive ID is critical to the investigation, such as in homicide cases, and fingerprinting comparison prior to autopsy is an option, it is allowable to print the decedent as long as the printing is completed by our staff or under our direct supervision, and as long as any potential evidence on the hands is documented and recovered as necessary.

*This policy has been approved and is in effect until further notice:*

  
Benjamin Trotter DO, Coroner

  
Date