



Time of Death Documentation Policy/Procedures

Policy# 12-0720-1 Time of Death Policy and Procedures Total Pages=2 (Revised 02/27/2015)

Purpose: To have a standard for assessment and documentation of the death scene and of the changes after death related to time of death.

Justification: This will make available the needed information to allow for more detailed opinion concerning the window of opportunity of the time of death.

Policy:

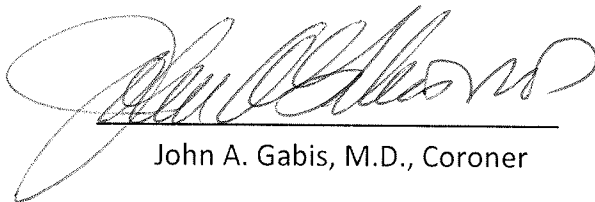
1. These procedures will be done on all deaths that the investigator responds to the death scene; with the exception of advanced decomposition or charring of body and/or when time of death is not in question(example competent witnessed death). See item#5 for complete list of exclusions.
2. For the purpose of this policy, advanced decomposition includes but not limited to a greenish discoloration to the abdomen.
3. The findings will be documented on the investigator's worksheet. Detailed documentation may be either within the narrative section or the death details note section within the coroner database.

Procedures:

1. The environmental/ambient temperature will be documented by placing the digital thermometer near the decedent's body, preferably at chest level, for an appropriate amount of time.
2. The investigator should also document, including photo, the room thermostat temperature and setting, if available.

3. Livor mortis (Lividity) will be documented as to present or absent, location and if fixed or non-fixed.
4. Liver (core body) temperature will be documented by using the same digital thermometer as used for environmental temperature. Include time taken in documentation. The thermometer insertion site will be properly marked and documented on the worksheet and autopsy request form. Site will also be photographed. Temperature should be taken every hour body remains on scene.
5. Liver temperature should not be taken on infants, bodies in advanced decomposition, charred bodies, or bodies that resuscitation efforts have been performed.
6. Rigor mortis will be assessed for by manipulating the finger/s joint/s, arm/elbow joint and the leg/knee joint. Document individual joints as either absent, non-fixed or fixed.
7. Other pertinent scene markers will be documented including but not limited to, clothing, date of mail not collected from mailbox, verifiable last seen alive from witness/s.
8. If advanced decomposition is present with insect activity, consider collecting insects as per recommended collection procedures for entomology consult. See Forensic Entomology Policy and Procedures.

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



John A. Gabis, M.D., Coroner

Feb. 27, 2015

Date