

Determining Case Jurisdiction

Policy:

All deaths reported to the Skagit Coroner's Office shall be thoroughly investigated to determine jurisdiction and, for those deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the Coroner, to aid in the certification of the cause and manner of death, pursuant with RCW 68.50.010, (Coroner's jurisdiction over remains).

The jurisdiction of bodies of all deceased persons who come to their death suddenly when in apparent good health without medical attendance within the thirty-six hours preceding death; or where the circumstances of death indicate death was caused by unnatural or unlawful means; or where death occurs under suspicious circumstances; or where a coroner's autopsy or postmortem or coroner's inquest is to be held; or where death results from unknown or obscure causes, or where death occurs within one year following an accident; or where the death is caused by any violence whatsoever, or where death results from a known or suspected abortion; whether self-induced or otherwise; where death apparently results from drowning, hanging, burns, electrocution, gunshot wounds, stabs or cuts, lightning, starvation, radiation, exposure, alcoholism, narcotics or other addictions, tetanus, strangulations, suffocation or smothering; or where death is due to premature birth or still birth; or where death is due to a violent contagious disease or suspected contagious disease which may be a public health hazard; or where death results from alleged rape, carnal knowledge or sodomy, where death occurs in a jail or prison; where a body is found dead or is not claimed by relatives or friends, is hereby vested in the county coroner, which bodies may be removed and placed in the morgue under such rules as are adopted by the coroner with the approval of the county commissioners, having jurisdiction, providing therein how the bodies shall be brought to and cared for at the morgue and held for the proper identification where necessary.

Deaths should be reported to the Skagit County Coroner's Office immediately in order to determine jurisdiction.

In general all deaths occurring outside of admission to medical health care facilities (i.e, hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice) and certain cases of admitted deaths (falls with injury, delayed deaths during hospitalization) are reported.

Deaths are reported to the Skagit County Coroner's Office by police, medical personnel at hospitals, nursing homes, and by members of the funeral industry. These calls go to the main telephone number for the Skagit County Coroner's Office or are delivered by text message from the Skagit County Dispatch to all Coroner-issued cell phones.

The investigator will obtain demographic information about the decedent and the information regarding the circumstances of death, assign a case number, and after consultation with the Coroner, determine whether or not the death falls under the jurisdiction of the Skagit County Coroner's Office.

The Coroner's office will assist with completing death certificates consistent with Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Documentation will be in the Skagit County Coroner's automated Case Management System (MDI log).