

Identification

Policy:

Prior to removal of the body, the investigator will securely place an identification band on the decedent's right lower extremity (ankle).

- If unable to use a right extremity, a left extremity can be used.

The identification band will contain the case number and decedent's identity.

- If the identity of the person is unknown, the investigator will write "unidentified male" or "unidentified female" on the band.
- If the identity is presumed to be a certain name, then the investigator will write "tentative" next to the name.

The Skagit County Coroner's Office will use the following methods to identify a decedent:

- visual means (i.e. legal next of kin, driver license or government issued ID, tattoos, scars or marks)
- fingerprints
- medical or dental imaging
- devices such as implants or other identifying data

All homicides require scientific identification prior to release from the Skagit County Coroner's Office.

Positive identification of a decedent will be recorded in the official Coroner's Report of Death and retained in the case file.

RCW: 68.50.330 allows the Skagit County Coroner to have a qualified specialist to assist with the identification of remains under the jurisdiction of Skagit County Coroner. If a scientific form of identification is used, a signed report will be provided to the Coroner's Office and kept in the electronic case file.

If identification is unsuccessful within 30 days, the Skagit County Coroner will forward any and all dental information and imaging to the Washington State Patrol for identification purposes. Potential matches will be forwarded to the Skagit County Coroner's Office.

The Skagit County Coroner's Office will allow families and next of kin to identify decedents at the home or place of death if appropriate. If the decedent has been transported to the Coroner's Office, the family will not be able to view the body at the Coroner's Office. The family can request a cleaned-up face photo of the decedent to verify identity. If a viewing is requested, the family will need to make arrangements with the funeral home selected.

Refer to RCW 68.50.330