

Post-Mortem Radiology

Policy:

An integral aspect of certain autopsy examinations is the performance of postmortem radiology. The decision for obtaining X-rays is the responsibility of the Coroner or Board-Certified Forensic Pathologist. Prior to release of the decedent, the Coroner's Office should ensure that the X-rays are obtained at a proper exposure level to allow for valid interpretation and are labeled with unique case number and are properly oriented to the viewer using a left or right designation on each radiograph.

Cases that require postmortem x-rays include:

- Penetrating and perforating trauma
- Gunshot wounds
- Blunt force trauma, such as traffic-related accidents
- Sharp force injury
- Decomposed remains
- Skeletonized remains
- Homicides
- Pediatric
- Cases in which death is caused by an explosive device
- Charred remains
- Unidentified remains
- Traffic Fatalities

Postmortem x-rays should be taken after completing the intake of remains.

If there are multiple projectiles involved, the body is charred, or the case is an infant or pediatric case, full body x-rays including all extremities, must be taken.

Postmortem x-rays will be taken prior to autopsy and if the body bag is sealed, the x-rays will be taken through the body bag without breaking the seal.

The attending forensic pathologist or the Coroner may request additional postmortem x-rays during or after the postmortem examination.

Lateral views should be obtained when foreign objects such as projectiles are present in the anterior/posterior images.

Lateral view in addition to anterior view x-ray of the head shall be taken when foreign objects are present.

The Coroner staff shall export all x-ray images immediately after completion into the electronic case file and MDI log.

Post-Mortem Radiology cont.

Radiology Safety

It is the responsibility of the Skagit County Coroner's Office and the staff using radiation sources to utilize proper radiation safety practices, minimizing exposure and risk of injury.

All staff utilizing X-ray equipment and assisting with obtaining X-rays shall wear radiation dosimeter badges/rings.

Radiation dosimeter badges and rings are tested and reported by a vendor that specializes in monitoring services for radiation detection and protection.

Any personnel in the room during imaging must wear protective equipment, such as a lead apron. Additional personnel cannot remain in the room during imaging without protective equipment.