



Autopsy and Toxicology Guidelines/Policy

Policy# 14-0703-3 Autopsy and Toxicology Guidelines/Policy **Revised 01/09/2024**

Total Pages=2

Purpose: To have established guidelines for investigator/s to resource when making determination on need for forensic autopsy and/or toxicology testing.

Justification: The role of the coroner is to determine the cause and manner of death in cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner based on ORC 313.12 (*When any person dies as a result of criminal or other violent means, by casualty, by suicide, or in any suspicious or unusual manner, when any person, including a child under two years of age, dies suddenly when in apparent good health, or when any mentally retarded person or developmentally disabled person dies regardless of the circumstances,...*)

An autopsy and/or toxicology may be required to determine the cause and manner of death.

Guidelines/Policy:

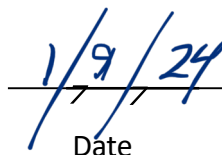
1. These are guidelines and are not meant to be the only factor to consider when making the determination for the need for an autopsy and/or toxicology, unless mandated by ORC. (Example item #6}
2. Currently only complete forensic autopsies will be completed on behalf of this office. If only a partial autopsy is required to help determine cause but not manner of death, that case should be deferred to the primary care physician for consideration of a hospital autopsy.
3. Deaths that occur during a criminal act shall receive full forensic autopsy and toxicology testing. This includes, but not limited to, homicides.
4. Suspected suicides shall be considered homicides until proven otherwise and should be autopsied and receive full forensic toxicology.
5. All deaths that are suspicious in nature and foul play cannot be ruled out shall receive a full forensic autopsy and toxicology.

6. If a child under two years of age dies suddenly when in apparent good health, a full forensic autopsy and toxicology shall be performed as stated in ORC 313.121.
7. All deaths that occur while in custody and/or involves law enforcement or the department of corrections shall receive a complete forensic autopsy and toxicology. See policy# 12-0727-1 Deaths in Custody.
8. In cases where foul play is not suspected and can be ruled out based on scene investigation and death presentation, the forensic autopsy may be deferred.
9. In cases with documented disease/s processes and/or risk factors for sudden death with a death presentation consistent with a natural death, the autopsy may be deferred.
10. In cases where there is compelling evidence of probable drug overdose without apparent criminal involvement of another, toxicology will be performed, and the autopsy may be deferred.
11. In toxicology only cases, all specimens will be stored in the refrigerator in the locked evidence room until shipping can occur. All guidelines set forth by the receiving forensic laboratory will be followed. The shipping tracking number will be maintained for Chain of Custody.
12. If the investigator does not have enough information to make a decision on what forensic exam/testing is required, the body will be held until enough information becomes available. These cases should be consulted with coroner prior to release of body.
13. If any doubt, especially in manner of death, a forensic autopsy should be considered. The coroner will be consulted on these cases prior to releasing the body.
14. Any objection to autopsy based on religious beliefs, this office will follow the Ohio Revised Code 313.131, Autopsy contrary to deceased person's religious beliefs.

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



Benjamin Trotter, DO, Coroner


Date