

Administration/Organization

Created 11/18/2010
Revised 09/22/2023

Purpose

The following will outline the roles and responsibilities of the employees of [REDACTED]

Policy

[REDACTED] has many members that make up the team. Each member, while having defined roles and responsibilities, are also expected to assist in whatever way possible to fulfill the mission statement of the coroner's [REDACTED]

Procedures

Coroner

A registered voter for [REDACTED] with the minimum age of eighteen years old can be elected to the duties of the Coroner, who will be responsible for developing the rules and regulations for the proper investigation of deaths occurring within the [REDACTED]

Forensic Pathologist

A licensed physician who is duly qualified as a pathologist and is appointed by the Coroner. Per Colorado Revised Statute, all forensic autopsies required to be performed under Coroner jurisdiction must be performed by a board-certified forensic pathologist (CRS 30-10-606.5). This physician must have a valid license to practice medicine within the State of Colorado, must be eligible for the American Board of Pathology Forensic Pathology board certification exam at the time of hire, and must obtain ABP FP board certification within two years of hire. A copy of the valid Colorado medical license (upon renewal on a biennial basis) must be maintained with the [REDACTED] administrator. This physician conducts examinations within the jurisdiction as directed by the Coroner in order to determine cause and manner of death, reporting those findings to [REDACTED]

The duties of the Forensic Pathologist may include:

- Performing autopsy and external examinations
- Providing supervision for medicolegal investigators.
- Signing [REDACTED] death certificates.
- Acting as backup for the medicolegal death investigators with both investigation and medical expertise.
- Coordinating schedules of rotation and availability of the medicolegal death investigators
- Providing expertise to local law enforcement, medical personnel, the [REDACTED] of the district attorney, public defender and members of mortuary services
- Acting as a medical liaison for [REDACTED]

Administrator

The [REDACTED] administrator works under the general supervision of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Coroner. The individual is essential in running the day-to-day operations of the [REDACTED] preparing statistical reports, coordinating schedules and timesheets, and managing the annual budget. The [REDACTED] administrator is also an integral part of the team in dealing with families and directing them to the appropriate resources.

Medicolegal Death Investigator

The medicolegal death investigator (MDI) is appointed by and works under the general supervision of the Coroner. A medicolegal death investigator serves as a non-physician investigator for response to an investigation of all reportable deaths occurring within [REDACTED]. The appointment of a medicolegal death investigator follows a prescribed selection and training process, and continues based on satisfactory performance of tasks and satisfactory completion of certain mandatory education requirements (American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators certification). A designation of Senior Medical Investigator may be made based on years of service, case management aptitude, ability to lead and coordinate other MDIs, and other special expertise.

The duties of the Medicolegal Death Investigator may include:

- Being first contact for new death reports, including information gathering and triage
- Responding to the scene of death in a timely manner
- Pronouncing death when decedent is not in an attended environment
- Assuming custody of the remains until released for transport
- Collecting information following national (NAME and ABMDI) guidelines and using standard [REDACTED] procedures
- Photographing the scene and body in [REDACTED] with standard practice
- Advising law enforcement on initial findings and of further procedures
- Advising the legal next of kin of coroner procedures and that an autopsy may be performed as applicable
- Conducting examinations and procedures as specified
- Responding to subpoenas to appear and give testimony at criminal and civil hearings
- Assisting in various [REDACTED] functions including paperwork, answering telephones, collecting pertinent medical data, releasing bodies, and dealing with the general public and grieving families

Autopsy Assistant

The autopsy assistants are directly supervised by the Forensic Pathologist, [REDACTED] and the Coroner's [REDACTED] Administrator. The main function of the autopsy assistant is to assist in carrying out the forensic examinations performed at the [REDACTED]. They are also required to assist in performing various [REDACTED] functions including paperwork, answering telephones, delivering specimens, collecting pertinent medical data, preparing statistical reports, releasing bodies, and dealing with the general public and grieving families.

The autopsy related duties include but are not limited to:

- Set-up and clean-up of autopsy suite
- Surgically opening head, cranium and body cavities
- Removing and returning organs at the pathologist's discretion
- Cleaning body of any foreign or extraneous materials
- Photographing body
- Preparing the body for release following autopsy
- Assisting in collecting fluids, evidence, and other necessary material as the pathologist directs

[REDACTED]

All staff members are expected to be able to respond in a reasonable amount of time to assist in dealing with mass fatality incidents.

Acts Prohibited

Use of Drugs or Alcohol: The use of drugs, marijuana, or alcohol while on the job including responding on call is expressly prohibited, and complaints of intoxicated behavior will be grounds for dismissal. Anyone using, hoarding, or distributing drugs or drug paraphernalia from any [REDACTED] case will be subject to immediate dismissal and may be subject to pertinent criminal charges.

Death of a Relative or Close Acquaintance: If a MDI is on call and learns that a relative or close acquaintance has died within [REDACTED] jurisdiction, that MDI will immediately contact his/her backup to do the required investigation or call [REDACTED] for further instructions. Investigation of the death of a relative or close acquaintance is not permitted.

Gifts/Gratuities: State of Colorado and [REDACTED] regulations prohibit any employee from accepting any favor or gratuity from any person, firm, or corporation which is engaged in or attempting to do business with [REDACTED]

Policy/Procedure Violations

Violations of this policy are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Revised Effective: 10/09/2015

Revised Effective: 09/26/2017

Revised Effective: 09/28/2019

Revised Effective: 10/01/2021

Revised Effective: 09/22/2023

Approved by:

[REDACTED]