

Q. How do I obtain a certified copy of the death certificate?

The coroner's office does not issue the death certificate. Copies can usually be requested through the funeral home when arrangements are made. As a courtesy to the family, funeral homes offer to obtain the certificates from the Health Department. The health department charges a fee for each copy obtained and any additional copies may be obtained directly from them.

Q. How long will it take before my loved one is released from the coroner's jurisdiction?

Depending on what time of day the coroner's office is notified and takes the jurisdiction, the medical information available to the coroner at that time and the circumstances surrounding the death, the body may be released the same day or later on the next day. In cases of suspicious deaths or deaths that require further investigation, your loved one may be held for additional time to allow for further examination, such as an autopsy and/or toxicology.

Q. Why are tubes and other medical devices left in place on the body before the autopsy?

Part of the autopsy is to investigate the proper application of therapeutic devices.

Q. Who contacts the funeral home?

Once you have selected a funeral home, please let them know that the body is under the jurisdiction of the coroner. Once a funeral home is selected, you must call the coroner's office to inform them of your choice. The coroner's office will then contact the funeral home when the body is ready for release.

Q. When will the autopsy report be ready and how do I obtain a copy?

Autopsy reports are generally available about 4-6 weeks from the date of death. The autopsy report is available at no charge to the legal next of kin, but only after the final ruling as to the cause and manner of death. Once this has been made we will mail you a letter with instructions with how you can receive a copy.

Q. Organ and Tissue Donations

This office supports such requests and will go to all efforts to respect the decedent's wishes.

Q. How is the Coroner's Office Funded

The budget for the office is provided out of the general fund for the county and approved by the county commissioners.

Q. Why did Haller Funeral Home pick up my loved one?

Haller Funeral Home provides removal service for the coroner's office. This service is provided at no cost to the family. This in no way effects the family's decision in using the funeral service of their choosing.

Important Contacts

Chillicothe Police: 740/773-1191
Ross County Sheriff: 740/775-1186
Ohio State Patrol 740/775-7770
Ross County Health Department, Vital Stats : 740/779-9630

Investigative Staff:

Amy K. Luckeydoo, M.D., Dep. Coroner

Medicolegal Death Investigators:

Andrew S. LaGard
Mark Gray
Scottie Cyrus
Alan Gossman
Nate Freeman

Mike Ratliff, Chief Medicolegal Death

Lead Investigator:

Contact#_____

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES



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https://rosscountyoio.gov/coroner/
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Ben Trotter, DO
Ross County Coroner

“We Speak For Those Who Can No Longer Speak For Themselves”

“Please accept our condolences on death of your loved one. We are here to help you through this process. We assure you that we will do everything possible to find out to the best of our ability the cause and manner of your loved one’s death.”

Your Coroner



Ben Trotter, DO

Ross County Coroner's Office Mission Statement

The mission of the Ross County Coroner's Office is to serve and protect the health and safety of the community by maintaining the highest standard of professionalism and integrity in determining the cause and manner of death. We are dedicated as a team to conduct independent investigations with the intent to ensure that the circumstances surrounding the death are understood and explained. We seek to enhance the health, safety and well-being of the citizens and guests of Ross County.

Important Terms

1. **Cause of Death**— the medical condition that caused one’s death.
2. **Manner of Death**— What events brought about the death. May be natural, accidental, homicide, suicide or undetermined.
3. **Pending Death Certificate**— Pending will be listed on the death certificate until the investigation is completed, then a supplemental certificate will be filed at the health department with the cause and manner of death.

Coroner History

A 1788 Northwest Territory ordinance provided for the appointment of a coroner for each county to serve a term of two years. Such appointment was to be made by the Governor. The duties of the coroner included holding inquests over the bodies of all persons found within the county who were believed to have died by criminal violence or casualty. He was also to have the same powers as a sheriff.

The Constitution of the State of Ohio enacted in 1802 provided that a coroner should be elected in each county to serve for a term of two years. A statute enacted in 1805 stated the duties and authority of the coroner and provided for remuneration on a fee basis.

It was not until 1921 that the coroner was empowered to perform autopsies and then only upon authorization by the county prosecutor. In 1936, the term of office was increased to four years. In 1945, the statutes governing the office of coroner were revised to the extent that the Ohio law in this respect is now considered a model for providing modern medico-legal investigation in a democracy. Some of these revisions include: specific definitions of duties and authority; remuneration by salary rather than fees for all coroners.

Who is the Coroner? The coroner is a licensed physician who has been elected to serve a 4 year term. Once elected, they complete a required coroner’s training program sponsored by the Ohio State Coroner’s Association (OSCA). This official is then mandated to complete additional continuing medical education and training provided by OSCA related to their duties as a coroner.

Purpose: The County Coroner’s Office is an independent agency that investigates and certifies the cause and manner of death of persons who die within this county under circumstances that are sudden, unexpected, unnatural, suspicious or violent as designated in ORC 313.12.

Q. Why is the Coroner's Office involved? Ohio Law requires the County Coroner to investigate the circumstances and determine the cause and manner of death of all deaths that are:

- sudden, when a person is in apparent good health
- not under the care of a physician
- suspicious, unusual or unexplained
- the result of violence, unlawful or due to criminal neglect.

Q. What do I do once my loved one has been taken to the morgue?

As soon as possible, select a funeral home to handle the burial or cremation arrangements for your loved one. Notify our office with the name of the funeral home you have selected. We will notify them once your loved one has been released.

Q. Who is considered the legal next of kin, in order?

Spouse, Adult children, Parents, Siblings, Niece/Nephew.

Q. Will an autopsy be performed?

Autopsies are routinely performed to determine the cause and manner of death on all cases listed above. Autopsies are not routinely performed in cases where there is significant medical history, the death appears to be from natural causes or there is no evidence of foul play.

Q. Will I still be able to have an open casket service if an autopsy is performed?

Yes - autopsies are performed in a professional and dignified manner that does not interfere with the viewing of the deceased in a normal manner.

Q. Do I have to pay for an autopsy to be done?

No - there is no charge to the family for autopsies performed under the coroner's jurisdiction. Information on private autopsies is below.

Q. Why did you take my loved one’s medication? We also confiscate any prescription drugs prescribed to the decedent and as required by law, we must assure that no one else has access to them. They are inventoried and destroyed.

Q: Can the family request a private autopsy? Yes, and we can provide you with resources on private autopsies. Private autopsies are at the expense of the family.