

Coroner Duties and Responsibilities

Supervisory

- Provide death investigation services or staff supervision services 24 hour per day, 7 days a week.
 - Respond to incoming calls or texts from staff in a timely manner.
- Maintain office hours each week.
- Meet with staff at start of day of shift to check in and follow up on daily work.
- Direct and supervise the staff's activities and ensure equitable distribution of offices workload.
- Work with medicolegal death investigators on any issues involving their cases or work.
- Direct and supervise the departmental staff activities, delegate duties, approve leave, evaluate performance, and conduct counseling and discipline.
- Assist with training staff and interns

Administrative

- Formally review cases to verify information and narrative are complete in MDI log.
- Verify cases are ready to close out
- Review and Email work schedule to all Coroner staff
- Monitor Budget and submit budget amendments when needed
- Prepare and submit yearly budget request
- Submit quarterly budget reports to County
- Maintain statistics for office
- Create and maintain yearly statistics for drug overdose deaths and suicides
- Create Annual report and post on Coroner website
- Maintain Coroner website including stats and confirmation of death list
- Handle case requests from the WA Violent Death Reporting System and/or SUDORS
- Keep track and submit autopsy reimbursement for the county in February and August each year
- Submit invoices for reimbursement of use of facility for donation cases
- Keep track and submit quarterly volunteer hours
- Creates and/or maintains contracts with funeral homes, pathologists, and any other entities
- Perform policy review and implementation yearly
- Prepare and submit credit card payments at end of each month to Auditors Office
- Prepare any invoices needing to be entered and submitted to Auditors Office
 - Verify and sign invoice entry before submitting to auditor's office
- Enter and submit payroll to auditor's office
- Maintain and submit autopsy reimbursements to the state (2 times per year)
- Maintain contracts
- Submit appropriate forms for new contracts
- Assist with creating work schedule for staff
- Manage staff meetings
- Keep in communication with staff on updates
- Completes performance reviews with each employee once a year as well as meet with each staff member quarterly regarding goals, strengths, and weaknesses, concerns, or successes.
- Work with law enforcement agencies and other agencies regarding a case or in providing information related to the office.

- Work with hospitals, nursing facilities, hospice, and primary care providers regarding the role of the Coroner as well as policies and procedures regarding deaths.
- Attend state Coroner/ME meetings quarterly
- Cooperate with and/or provide information and education to the medical community regarding death statistics and trends, consumer product problems, organ donation, etc.
- Represent the county and the department at local, state, and federal agencies and other organizations regarding matters of interest to Skagit County.
- Remain up to date on current medical and forensic developments

Daily tasks

- Certify death certificates on cases that require that action
- Create and submit affidavits for correction on required cases
- Perform a medical records review and summary on cases
- Write comprehensive statements of investigation and other reports to support establishment of cause, manner, and mechanism of death.
- Coordinate with forensic specialists (forensic pathologists, anthropologists, odontologists, DNA, crime lab) regarding services on a case.
- Review toxicology results on cases in question and determine if consultation or follow up is needed.
- Review cases in question before submitting for case closure

Tasks when needed

- Perform general administrative and clerical functions, including answering phones, making calls, preparing files, logs and records maintenance, department correspondence and reports, and transcribing reports.
- Assist with taking incoming death calls and respond to scenes
- Respond to suspicious, homicide, or infant death calls if medicolegal death investigator II is not available
- Assist with autopsies or external examinations
- Assist with obtaining toxicology samples
- Assist with obtaining fingerprints
- Assist with taking x-rays
- Assist with releasing of bodies to funeral homes
- Assist with collection and documenting property and evidence
- Assist with releasing of property and/or evidence
- Conduct and/or verify NOK searches on indigent or unclaimed cases
- Assist with locating and notifying NOK
- Assist with the completion of indigent cremation paperwork
- Testify in court when subpoena.

Medicolegal Death Investigator II

Supervisory

- Act as point of contact for the office in the absence of the Coroner.
- Serve as lead in office under Coroner.
- Oversee and train subordinate staff including Medicolegal Death Investigator I, on-call deputy coroners, and interns.
- Verify that casework is completed in MDI log including narrative, worksheets, and photos.
- Review case files ready for initial review and places in Coroner's box for formal review.

Administrative

- Enter and submit Accounts Payable
- Create staff work schedule
- Inventory and order supplies
- Track toxicology testing and reports
- Track property in-house. Dispose or release for auction purposes if unclaimed after designated time.
- Track Toxicology and Stock Tissue. Once retention period has ended, retain or destroy samples.
- Enter and monitor all unidentified cases in NamUs. Verify all required steps are completed for unidentified cases per state law.
- Oversee unclaimed/indigent cases.
 - Follow up with any leads for possible family
 - Contact interested party after 45 days to claim cremains
 - Obtain proper paperwork and reimbursement of cremation (if applicable)
- Assist Coroner with policy implantation and review.
- Assist Coroner with review of applicants for internships and job postings for the office.
- Assist Coroner with interview and selection of applicants.
- Help in development of new programs for the office.

Daily Tasks

- Answer in-coming calls.
- Respond to emails in the Coroner general email account.
- Take death investigation reports and responds to scenes.
- Respond or take lead on suspicious, homicide, or infant death calls.
- Responsible for a timely response to scenes.
- Conduct a thorough and efficient scene investigation (documentation, photographs, interviews, completion of forms).
- Make observations of the scene and perform a thorough examination of the body at the scene.
- Ensure positive identification of the decedent is made and the immediate next of kin is notified of the death in a timely compassionate and professional manner.

Medicolegal Death Investigator II Daily Tasks cont.

- Interact and communicate with family members and friends in a comforting compassionate manner.
- Document, inventory and collect any personal property accompanying the body.
- Prepare and transport decedent to Coroner's Office when requested by Coroner.
- Write narratives and complete cases in MDI log.
- Upload documents into MDI log.
- Perform a medical records review and summary on cases that require such.
- Call doctor offices to inform of death or obtain more information.
- Follow up with agencies (L&I, APS, CPS, NTSB, Law enforcement, Fire Marshall, ATF, FBI etc.) for more information or updates.
- Release bodies to funeral homes.
- Release property to designated party or funeral home.
- Release evidence to agency.
- Package and submit toxicology sample with completed requisition form.
- Submit lab samples for cases requiring specific lab testing.
- Submit histology.
- Submit fingerprints when needed for identification purposes.
- Request government photo identification or drivers licenses to support identification when needed.
- Request EMS reports, agency reports, medical records and uploads to MDI log.
- Follow up with families or designated agencies regarding cases.
- Close out cases.
- Process records requests.
- Assist pathologist with performing autopsies.
- Perform external examinations which include obtaining fingerprints, toxicology samples.
- Take x-rays on requested cases.
- Certify death certificates, when requested by Coroner
 - Consult with Coroner for assistance.
- Coordinate with forensic specialists (forensic pathologists, anthropologists, odontologists, DNA, crime lab) regarding services on a case.
- Perform NOK searches on indigent or unclaimed cases.
- Locate and notify NOK.
- Transport skeletal cases to King County Medical Examiners Office.
- Transport cases for autopsy services.
- Retrieve cremains from funeral home or Lake Washington Technical Institute Body Donation Program.
- When requested by Coroner, complete indigent cremation paperwork.
- Take required or assigned training courses.
- Work assigned on-call shifts and assigned holidays.

Medicolegal Death Investigator I

Works under the direction of the Coroner and Medicolegal Death Investigator II

Daily Tasks

- Answers in-coming calls.
- Responds to emails in the Coroner general email account.
- Takes death investigation reports and responds to scenes.
- Responsible for a timely response to scenes.
- Conducts a thorough and efficient scene investigation (documentation, photographs, interviews, completion of forms).
- Makes observations of the scene and performs a thorough examination of the body at the scene.
- Ensures positive identification of the decedent is made and the immediate next of kin is notified of the death in a timely compassionate and professional manner.
- Interacts and communicates with family members and friends in a comforting compassionate manner.
- Documents, inventories, and collects any personal property accompanying the body.
- Prepares and transports decedent to Coroner's Office when requested by Coroner.
- Writes narratives and completes cases in MDI log.
- Uploads documents to MDI log.
- Performs a medical records review and summary on cases that require such.
- Calls doctor offices to inform of death or obtain more information.
- Follows up with agencies (L&I, APS, CPS, NTSB etc.) for more information or updates.
- Releases bodies to funeral homes.
- Releases property to designated party or funeral home.
- Releases evidence to agency.
- Packages and submits toxicology sample with requisition form.
- Submits lab samples for cases requiring specific lab testing.
- Submits histology.
- Submits fingerprints when needed for identification purposes.
- Requests drivers licenses to support identification when needed.
- Requests EMS reports, agency reports, medical records and uploads to MDI log.
- Follows up with families or designated agencies regarding cases.
- Assists with closing out cases.
- Processes records requests.
- Assists pathologist with autopsies.
- Performs external examinations which include obtaining fingerprints, toxicology samples.
- Takes x-rays on requested cases.
- Locates and notifies NOK.
- Attends staff meetings.
- Transports skeletal cases to King County Medical Examiners Office.
- Transports cases for autopsy services.

Medicolegal Death Investigator I Daily Tasks cont.

- Retrieves remains from funeral home or Lake Washington Technical Institute Body Donation Program.
- Takes required or assigned training courses.
- Works assigned on-call shifts and assigned holidays.

POLICY

Duties of the On-Call Deputy Coroner

- The Deputy Coroner On-Call is directly accountable to the Medicolegal Death Investigator II and the Coroner for implementation of all duties and direction concerning the Coroner's Office.
- On-call shifts are created based on the times in which coverage is needed for the office. This is mainly evening hours into early morning hours but can extend to covering 24 hours for holidays or when availability of full-time staff is limited.
- Each on-call deputy coroner will be assigned designated days of the week to cover calls and scene responses. The hours for coverage will be determined on the needs of the office. The on-call deputy will be made aware of the days assigned prior to schedule being published and will be responsible for being available on those days.
- While on-call, must be available by phone, and answer any incoming calls or texts during designated shift.
- Responsible for making sure the issued cell phone is turned on, re-started if has not been used in a few days, so that he/she can receive calls and text messages.
- Responsible for communicating with the Coroner or Medicolegal Death Investigator II about any calls or messages received as well as scene updates.
- Responsible for a timely response to scenes.
- Conducts a thorough and efficient scene investigation (documentation, photographs, interviews, completion of forms).
- Makes observations of the scene and performs a thorough examination of the body at the scene.
- Ensures positive identification of the decedent is made and the immediate next of kin is notified of the death in a timely compassionate and professional manner.
- Interacts and communicates with family members and friends in a comforting compassionate manner.
- Documents, inventories, and collects any personal property accompanying the body.
- Prepares and transports decedent to Coroner's Office when requested by Coroner.
- Completes all required reports and documents before end of shift.
- Communicates any follow up needed for a case to the in-coming investigator as well as adds to the *follow up* document.
- Assists with autopsies or external body examinations when requested.

Intern

The Intern will be under the direct supervision of a Medicolegal Death Investigator I or II for the duration of the internship.

- Assists death investigators with the following:
 - Responds with investigator to death scenes.
 - Assists investigator with evaluation and documentation at the scene.
 - Assists the investigator with body examination at the scene.
 - Assists the investigator with the removal of the body from the scene and transporting the body to the Coroner's Office.
 - Assists the investigator with admitting the body at the Coroner's Office.
 - Assists the investigator with creating labels, case files, adding information to the white board.
 - Assists the investigator with scanning and uploading documents to MDI log.
 - Assists the investigator with sending and receiving faxes.
 - Assists the investigator with releasing bodies to funeral homes.
 - Assists the investigator with collecting, documenting, and releasing of evidence or property.
 - Assists the investigator with external body examinations.
 - Assists the investigator with labeling, packaging, and putting away of samples.
- Sets up autopsy suite for autopsy.
- Assists the forensic pathologist and investigator during an autopsy.
- Performs daily vehicle checks, restocks vehicle with supplies, and adds fuel to vehicles when required.
- Answers incoming calls to the office when other staff is unavailable to answer the phone.
- Cleans up the morgue.
- Takes care of laundry including folding and putting away.
- Assists the public, family, or agencies that come to the front desk.
- Requests death certificates on cases.
- Verifies information on death certificate to what is entered in MDI log.
- Assists the Coroner or death investigators with any projects.
- Provides written documentation of internship experience.