

What do I do now?

- Contact a funeral home or crematory of your choosing and make arrangements for disposition.
- Arrange for care of any dependents as well as pets
- Secure their residence and remove any valuables.
- Cancel any scheduled appointments of the deceased.
- If he/she was employed, contact Employer.
- Advise creditors (banks) of the death.

Locate the following Documents:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Will, Power of Attorney or other directives
- Marriage License
- Military discharge papers (DD-214)
- Copy of funeral prearrangements
- Life insurance policies

If your loved one was a Veteran:

- Entered service date and place
- Service number
- Date/place separated from service
- Grade, Rank, or Ranking
- Organization and Branch of Service

Information for the Funeral Home

- Deceased's First, Middle, Last name
- Deceased's Maiden Name
- Deceased's Home Address
- Deceased's Social Security Number
- Deceased's Date of Birth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Marital Status
- Spouse's First and Last Name
- Deceased's highest level of education
- Deceased's Occupation
- Deceased's Place of Birth (city/state)
- Father's Name, Birth City and State
- Mother's Name, Birth City, State

Skagit County Agencies

- Skagit Co. Sheriff 360-416-1911
- Mount Vernon PD 360-336-6271
- Anacortes PD 360-293-4684
- Burlington PD 360-755-0921
- Sedro-Woolley PD 360-855-0111
- WA State Patrol 360-757-1175

- Skagit Co. Public Health 360-416-1500
(Issues certified Death Certificates)

- Dept. of Veteran Affairs 1-800-827-1000
- Mount Vernon VA 360-588-5156
- Social Security 1-800-772-1213

Funeral Homes in Skagit County

Anacortes

- Evans 360-293-3311
- Skagit Cremation 360-424-0282

Mount Vernon

- Hawthorne 360-424-1154
- Alpha Omega 360-424-3531
- Kern 360-336-2153

Sedro-Woolley

- Lemley 360-855-1288

Alternate Funeral Agencies-Body Donation

- Lake Wa. Tech Funeral Service Education Program 425-739-8306
- BioGift 866-670-1799

The funeral home can assist with getting copies of the death certificate, arranging out of state transportation for your loved one, insurance and veteran benefits.

NOTE: Skagit County does NOT have an indigent program to assist with paying for arrangements. If funds are a factor, the funeral home might have payment plans or suggest alternatives.

Skagit County Coroner's Office

**Hayley L. Thompson, D-ABMDI
Coroner**

SURVIVORS GUIDE



Investigator: _____

Case#: _____

1700 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Office Hours: 8am-6pm daily
24-hour Office Phone: (360) 416-1996
Fax: (360) 848-1173
Email: coroner@co.skagit.wa.us

On behalf of the Skagit County Coroner's Office, we offer our most sincere condolences to you and your family for the loss of your loved one. It is our hope this brochure will assist you during the grieving process and help answer questions about the role of the Coroner.

Why is the Coroner's Office involved?

WA Law requires the Coroner to investigate certain types of deaths and determine the cause and manner of death. If the Coroner's Office is investigating the death of your loved one, it is likely that the death falls under one of these categories:

1. The death was unattended meaning the deceased was not under medical supervision at time of death.
2. The death is of a sudden, suspicious, or unnatural nature.

How does the Coroner obtain information for the investigation?

The Coroner's office uses several methods to gather information and evidence needed to complete their investigation. These may include, but are not limited to, forensic autopsy, medical and dental records review, photographs, fingerprints, police records, interviews to include information gathered from family and/or friends and witnesses.

Our office will continue to stay in touch with you during the entire investigation and will inform you of any information that we can.

Where will my loved one be taken?

Your loved one will be transported to the Skagit County Coroner's Office:
**1700 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273**

Do I need to identify my loved one?

No. In most cases identification is obtained by investigators at the location of death. In some cases, positive identification may have to be obtained by: fingerprint, dental, x-ray comparison, medical implant/device or DNA.

Is viewing allowed at the Coroner's Office?

No. Viewing is not an available option at the Coroner's Office. You can make arrangements with the selected funeral home for a viewing following the coroner's examination.

NOTE: the surgical procedures used to perform an autopsy will not interfere with having a viewing.

Is an autopsy always performed?

No, in many instances the cause and manner of death can be determined by medical records and other information obtained. In the instances that this information needs to be determined, verified, or evidence gathered, an autopsy will take place.

If you have any objections or requests regarding having an autopsy performed, please contact us and we will work with you regarding those concerns.

What if I want an autopsy performed?

If the Coroner's Office declines to perform an autopsy, the family has the right to have a private autopsy done at their own expense.

When will my loved one be released to a funeral home?

Your loved one will be available for release to a funeral home after the completion of our examination of the body which may require an autopsy- generally within 5 days of the death. In cases where additional investigation is required (such as identification confirmation), the body may need to be held longer.

How do I get the personal items that were with my loved one when they died?

Once any needed procedures have been completed and your loved one is ready for release to the funeral home, personal items will be sent to the funeral home with your loved one. There are occasions when personal items must be held for evidence even though your loved one's release to a funeral home has taken place. If this occurs, our office can answer any questions about this process. All personal items are securely kept at the Coroner's Office until they are authorized to be released.

Do I have to pay for any Coroner Services?

No. The Coroner's Office is funded by tax dollars. All standard services provided by the Coroner's Office are completed at no cost to the family.

Will I be told the cause and manner of death of my loved one?

Yes. In cases where a forensic autopsy is needed or toxicology is being looked into, our office will keep in contact with the legal next-of-kin regarding updates on the investigation as well as inform the next-of-kin of any final findings. Many times, test results take longer to complete than the initial autopsy and a 'Pending' death certificate will be issued in the meantime. This process can take 3-4 months.

Can I use a 'Pending' Death Certificate?

The death investigation continues after the Coroner's Office has completed any initial examination and your loved one has been released to a funeral home. The marking of the cause and manner of death on the death certificate as 'pending' allows you to proceed with any planned arrangements. You may also use this 'pending' death certificate to begin other legal processes while the investigation continues.

Can I get a copy of the autopsy report?

Yes, once the investigation is complete to include any toxicology, histology, or other further testing. Our office will contact the family once the case is closed. This process takes 3-4 months.

Autopsy reports and Coroner records are confidential and not public record. Family members may obtain a copy of our reports by submitting a records request form with photo ID. **Preliminary reports are not available.**

How do I obtain a death certificate?

There are 2 ways: you can obtain copies directly from the funeral home OR from the Vital Records Office once the death certificate is filed by the funeral home (360) 416-1500.