



International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

Collaboration · Education · Accreditation

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through collaboration, education, and accreditation.

A. Agency Practices

1. Professional Membership

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|--|-----|----|-----|
| a. The chief medicolegal officer should be a member in good standing with the IACME. | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. The chief medicolegal officer, the lead medicolegal death investigator, or a manager within the medicolegal death investigative group shall be a member in good standing with the IACME.+ | Yes | No | |

2. Agency Contact Information

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| a. The medicolegal death investigation agency's contact information shall be published online. This information shall include phone number, email address, and web address.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. Each medicolegal death investigator shall have an official agency email address, or the agency shall provide a singular departmental email address that all investigators can use.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. The chief medicolegal officer and any investigative personnel should have official business cards with agency contact information. | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the returning of calls and emails within a specified and reasonable time frame.+ | Yes | No | |
| e. The agency should have a brochure (digital or printed) or a handout explaining the medicolegal death investigation process and its estimated timeline that can be provided to families. | Yes | No | N/A |

3. Facility Space and Equipment

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|---|-----|----|--|
| a. The agency shall have an official facility and provide enough storage space so that items are not stacked in hallways or open areas, and are maintained in a safe and appropriate manner.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The facility shall include a workspace for all administrative personnel.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. The facility shall include a workspace for all investigative personnel.+ | Yes | No | |



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| d. The facility shall include a workspace for all forensic personnel, if applicable. + | Yes | No | |
| e. The facility shall have access to a gathering space for office functions (e.g., training areas, break rooms). + | Yes | No | |
| f. The facility shall have a workspace, free of confidential and sensitive information, for meeting with families. + | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency shall provide computers, internet, and phones for personnel. + | Yes | No | |
| h. The agency shall provide all personnel with sufficient administrative, investigative, and forensic equipment or resources to successfully conduct their assigned medicolegal death investigation responsibilities. + | Yes | No | |
| i. The agency shall have an electronic case management system. + | Yes | No | |
| j. The agency should have access to relevant resources and/or academic journals. | Yes | No | N/A |

4. Facility Security and Safety

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| a. The facility shall have security measures in place, including controlled access for personnel and the public. + | Yes | No | |
| b. The facility shall have posted building diagram(s) showing evacuation routes. + | Yes | No | |
| c. Administrative and morgue areas shall be separated by sealed doors for odor and biohazard control. + | Yes | No | |
| d. The facility shall have first aid kit(s) including defibrillators and naloxone readily accessible to personnel, with first aid kit(s) and defibrillators mounted and visible. + | Yes | No | |
| e. Work areas shall be maintained in a safe and appropriate manner. + | Yes | No | |



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f. The agency shall have access to 24-hour locked storage for collected evidence and property. +	Yes	No	
g. The facility shall have a secure, lockable location with controlled access for case files. +	Yes	No	
h. The facility shall have appropriate lighting in all work areas. +	Yes	No	
i. The facility shall have a documented preventive maintenance program in place (e.g., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC]; electrical; mechanical). +	Yes	No	
j. The facility shall have appropriate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to accommodate the facility space and caseload. +	Yes	No	
k. The facility shall have routine cleaning performed. +	Yes	No	
l. The facility should have backup generator capabilities for essential functions.	Yes	No	N/A
m. The agency shall have a written policy covering cyber security protocols, internet use and password protection. +	Yes	No	

5. Agency Policies and Procedures

a. The agency shall have a policy and procedure manual that contains standards of internal operating procedures or guidelines. This manual shall be accessible to personnel and shall include coroner/medical examiner statutes as applicable. This manual shall be reviewed with approval documented biannually, by the chief medicolegal officer or their designee within management. +	Yes	No	
b. The agency shall make all applicable human resources guidelines available for personnel. +	Yes	No	
c. The agency shall have a written policy for reporting to appropriate public agencies decedents with, and personnel exposures to, suspected contagious diseases. +	Yes	No	



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| d. The agency shall have a written policy for handling religious or cultural sensitivity and autopsy objections.+ | Yes | No | |
| e. The agency shall have a written policy regarding media relations.+ | Yes | No | |
| f. The agency shall have a written policy describing which case types shall be examined by a forensic pathologist.+ | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency shall have a written policy describing which cases will be investigated and the level of investigation that will be conducted.+ | Yes | No | |
| h. The agency shall have a written policy for adjudicating family complaints, including appeals regarding autopsy performance and cause and manner of death determinations.+ | Yes | No | |
| i. The agency shall have a written policy defining law enforcement related and in-custody deaths, their special investigative considerations, and case postmortem examination requirements.+ | Yes | No | |
| j. The agency shall have a written policy defining case types that require a scene response.+ | Yes | No | |
| k. The agency shall have an organizational chart delineating clear lines of authority for decision-making.+ | Yes | No | |
| l. The agency should operate in accordance with all medicolegal death investigation-related standards posted within the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC)-approved registry. | Yes | No | N/A |
| m. The agency shall have a written policy on handling workplace injuries.+ | Yes | No | |

6. Records, Property and Evidence Storage, Release, and Retrieval Policies and Procedures

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|---|-----|----|--|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy covering record storage, maintenance, retrieval, and security.+ | Yes | No | |
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b. The facility shall have a minimum of 5 years of records on-site and physically retrievable or electronically accessible. +	Yes	No	
c. The agency shall have a written policy describing property and evidence collection, inventory, storage, and disposition, including prescription drugs and illicit drugs. +	Yes	No	
d. The agency shall document all deaths reported, including those accepted and declined for investigation. +	Yes	No	
e. The agency shall have a written policy describing the criteria used to determine case jurisdiction (accepted or declined) in all case reports. +	Yes	No	
f. The agency shall maintain a case numbering system or other unique identifier that is used to track all components of a case. +	Yes	No	
g. The agency shall have a written policy regarding completion times for all reports. +	Yes	No	
h. The agency shall have a written policy regarding chain of custody. +	Yes	No	
i. The agency shall have a written policy regarding confidentiality, including use of social media. +	Yes	No	
j. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the release of information, reports, photographs, and documents. +	Yes	No	
k. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the handling, secured storage, and disposition of currency. +	Yes	No	
l. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the collection and storage of specimens for DNA analysis. +	Yes	No	
m. The agency should have access to and should review prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) data on all suspected or confirmed drug-related deaths, if allowed by law.	Yes	No	N/A



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| n. The agency shall have a written policy covering record and case file transfer to a new administration.+ | Yes | No |
| o. The agency shall have a written policy regarding record retention.+ | Yes | No |
| p. The agency shall have a written policy for the transfer of records to the newly elected or appointed chief medicolegal officer.+ | Yes | No |

7. Annual Reporting

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|--|-----|----|-----|
| a. The agency shall prepare an annual report with descriptive and statistical data.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The agency shall produce an annual report containing the population served, coroner/medical examiner statutes, and a narrative description of the jurisdiction served.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. The annual report shall contain the number of deaths reported to the agency.+ | Yes | No | |
| d. The annual report shall contain the number of cases investigated by the agency.+ | Yes | No | |
| e. The annual report shall contain the number of cases by manner of death.+ | Yes | No | |
| f. The annual report shall contain the number of cases by “general” cause of death (within each manner-of-death category).+ | Yes | No | |
| g. The annual report shall contain the number of cases in which medicolegal death investigators performed a scene investigation.+ | Yes | No | |
| h. The annual report should contain the number of decedents transported by and/or to the facility. | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The annual report shall contain the number of autopsies (full or partial) and external examinations performed.+ | Yes | No | |



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j.	The annual report shall contain the number of cases where toxicology testing was performed.+	Yes	No	
k.	The annual report shall contain the number of decedents remaining unidentified at the end of the reporting year.+	Yes	No	
l.	The annual report should contain the number of referrals made to organ, tissue and eye procurement organizations. It should also contain the number of procurements by those organizations on cases.	Yes	No	N/A
m.	The annual report shall contain the number of decedents remaining unclaimed at the end of the reporting year.+	Yes	No	
n.	The annual report shall contain the number of exhumations ordered by the medicolegal death investigation agency during the reporting year.+	Yes	No	
o.	The most current annual report shall be available to the public (i.e., published on the state or county website).+	Yes	No	
p.	The annual report shall contain the number of total deaths in the geographic jurisdiction served.+	Yes	No	
q.	The annual report shall contain the number of cremations approved by the agency, if applicable.+	Yes	No	
r.	The annual report shall contain the number of deaths of infants and youths (birth-age 17), categorized by manner of death.+	Yes	No	
s.	The annual report shall contain the number of law enforcement-involved and in-custody deaths, categorized by manner of death.+	Yes	No	
t.	The annual report should contain the number of death notifications conducted by the agency.	Yes	No	N/A

8. Quality Assurance

a.	The agency shall have a written policy regarding quality assurance for determination of cause and manner of death.+	Yes	No	
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| b. The agency shall have a written policy regarding case and report reviews (investigative and autopsy).+ | Yes | No |
| c. The agency shall track case report status (e.g., complete vs. pending).+ | Yes | No |
| d. The agency shall require a criminal background check for all new personnel.+ | Yes | No |
| e. The agency shall have a written policy requiring an annual review of unidentified cases.+ | Yes | No |
| f. The agency shall have a written policy regarding notifying next of kin.+ | Yes | No |
| g. The agency shall have a written policy regarding decedent identification methods.+ | Yes | No |
| h. The agency shall complete death certificates consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or state vital reporting guidelines (e.g., listing specific drugs to which the death is attributed).+ | Yes | No |
| i. Of all final death certificates, 90% shall be completed within 120 days.+ | Yes | No |
| j. Cause of death recorded in the autopsy and investigative reports shall be consistent with what is stated on the death certificate.+ | Yes | No |
| k. The agency shall conduct an independent investigation separate from law enforcement or other investigative entities.+ | Yes | No |

9. Public Service and Public Health/Safety

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|--|-----|----|-----|
| a. The agency shall provide periodic public education when requested by organization such as schools, clubs, hospitals.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The agency should provide training to law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), fire departments, and hospitals. | Yes | No | N/A |



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| c. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the collection and destruction of the decedent's medications and illicit drugs at scenes to which the agency responds. + | Yes | No | |
| d. The agency shall ensure that all unidentified decedents are entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs.gov). + | Yes | No | |
| e. The agency shall coordinate with law enforcement to report data on unidentified decedents to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). + | Yes | No | |
| f. The agency shall participate in local or state-level child fatality review teams. + | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency should participate in local, state and federal-level data collection efforts or other multidisciplinary review teams, if applicable (e.g., National Violent Death Reporting System [NVDRS], State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System [SUDORS], overdose fatality review team, elder abuse review team). | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. The agency shall ensure that all unclaimed decedents, for whom no family was located, are entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs.gov). + | Yes | No | |
| i. The agency shall contact the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) when appropriate cases arise. + | Yes | No | |

10. Organ and Tissue Donation

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|--|-----|----|--|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy regarding collaboration with organ and tissue procurement organizations. + | Yes | No | |
| b. The agency shall make efforts to cooperate with organ and tissue procurement organizations. + | Yes | No | |

11. Mass Fatality Planning

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|---|-----|----|--|
| a. The agency shall implement a comprehensive disaster preparedness or mass fatality plan that shall be reviewed with approval documented biannually, by the chief medicolegal officer or their designee within management. + | Yes | No | |
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| b. The agency shall have written agreement(s) (memorandum of understanding [MOU], interagency agreement [IAA], etc.) regarding access to and use of needed resources in the event of a mass fatality.+ | Yes | No |
| c. The chief/lead investigator shall complete, at a minimum, Incident Command System (ICS) courses offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), including ICS-100, ICS-200, and ICS-700.+ | Yes | No |
| d. The agency shall participate in mass fatality drills, tabletop exercises, and functional drills annually.+ | Yes | No |
| e. The agency shall coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions regarding mass fatality planning.+ | Yes | No |
| f. The agency shall maintain contact information for pertinent officials and offices in case of a mass fatality incident.+ | Yes | No |
| g. The agency mass fatality plan shall address collection of data for missing persons reports (e.g., call center).+ | Yes | No |
| h. The agency shall have a mass fatality case or data management process (e.g., manual or electronic).+ | Yes | No |
| i. The agency mass fatality plan shall include protocols for establishing, staffing, maintaining, and running a victim identification center (VIC) within the family assistance center (FAC).+ | Yes | No |

12. Personnel Safety and Training

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|--|-----|----|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy to ensure compliance with government safety standards, including exposure to biohazards.+ | Yes | No |
| b. The agency shall provide for and document personnel training, including new personnel orientation, ongoing and annual training, field training, and continuing education (CE).+ | Yes | No |
| c. The chief/lead investigator shall be registered by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) or its Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB)-accredited equivalent.+ | Yes | No |



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|--|-----|----|-----|
| d. The majority of the medicolegal death investigators should be registered by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) or its Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB)-accredited equivalent. | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. The agency shall require and support opportunities for annual continuing education (CE) for investigative personnel. + | Yes | No | |
| f. The agency shall require all volunteer workers to follow the same policies and procedures followed by paid personnel performing similar duties. + | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency shall provide information and access to mental health and wellness resources for personnel. + | Yes | No | |
| h. The agency shall provide and document training to personnel on conducting death notifications. + | Yes | No | |



B. Investigative Practices

1. Investigations

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|--|-----|----|-----|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy regarding reporting of deaths and accepting or declining jurisdiction.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The agency shall have a written policy on scene investigation. This policy shall be consistent with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) scene investigation guidelines.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. A medicolegal death investigator shall be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to respond to calls for service and scene investigation.+ | Yes | No | |
| d. The agency shall have a written policy regarding infant death investigation. This policy shall be consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Sudden Unidentified Infant Death Investigation (SUIDI) guidelines (i.e., SUIDI Reporting Form).+ | Yes | No | |
| e. The agency shall have a written policy regarding death investigations of children (older than 1 year).+ | Yes | No | |
| f. The agency shall have a written policy regarding communication with next of kin in cases of sudden unexplained pediatric deaths and final death certification.+ | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency should have a written policy regarding stakeholder agencies (e.g., healthcare facilities) allowing memorial keepsakes prior to autopsy in sudden, unexplained pediatric deaths. | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. The agency shall have a written policy regarding interaction between the next of kin and the decedent (holding, touching, etc.) prior to autopsy in cases of suspicious and non-suspicious pediatric deaths.+ | Yes | No | |
| i. Doll re-enactments shall be attempted in all cases of sudden unexplained infant death. Cases with extenuating circumstances not allowing re-enactment shall be well documented.+ | Yes | No | |



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| j. The agency shall request and review emergency medical services (EMS) reports, law enforcement records, emergency department records, and hospital records when available. + | Yes | No |
| k. The agency shall have a written policy regarding formal pronouncement or field declaration of death. + | Yes | No |
| l. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the transfer of case information across shifts or supervisors. + | Yes | No |
| m. Paper, Tyvek or equivalent breathable bags shall be used to protect hands of suspected homicide victims and suspicious deaths when indicated. + | Yes | No |
| n. Body bags shall be secured and sealed by the medicolegal death investigator for all deaths where the agency takes possession of the remains (as appropriate). + | Yes | No |
| o. The agency shall have a written policy regarding communication of investigative findings with law enforcement agencies. + | Yes | No |
| p. The medicolegal death investigator shall conduct and document postmortem evaluations, including postmortem changes of the decedent. + | Yes | No |
| q. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the documentation, collection, transport, storage, and disposition of currency from the scene. + | Yes | No |
| r. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the documentation, collection, transport, storage, and disposition of prescription medications from the scene. + | Yes | No |
| s. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the documentation, collection, transport, storage, and disposition of illicit drugs from the scene. + | Yes | No |
| t. The agency shall provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including N95 masks (or equivalent), to personnel in sufficient quantities to avoid reuse. + | Yes | No |



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| u. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the reporting of deaths of foreign nationals to the consulate of the country of citizenship (per the Vienna Convention, Article 37).+ | Yes | No |
| v. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the interviewing of witnesses, family members, and other associates in determining manner of death. All interviews shall be documented in the case file.+ | Yes | No |
| w. The agency shall have a written policy requiring the medicolegal death investigator to maintain custody of the decedent (at the scene) until transportation, if decedent is being transported for further examination.+ | Yes | No |
| x. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the release of the decedent's personal effects at the scene.+ | Yes | No |

2. Identification

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|---|-----|----|-----|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy covering identification procedures.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the use of fingerprints, DNA, forensic genetic genealogy, and radiological or dental documentation to establish positive identification.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. The agency shall have a written policy regarding family members or friends making visual identification.+ | Yes | No | |
| d. The method of decedent identification shall be documented in the case file.+ | Yes | No | |
| e. The agency should require a signed affidavit of identification by the next of kin or other informant confirming the contextual identification. | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. The source of identification (e.g., government identification, license) shall be documented and a copy retained in the case file.+ | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency shall use certified professionals to conduct fingerprint comparisons (e.g. International Association of Identification [IAI]).+ | Yes | No | |



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| h. The agency shall have access to postmortem imaging equipment. + | Yes | No |
| i. The agency shall have access to DNA analysis performed by certified professionals. + | Yes | No |
| j. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the disposition of unidentified decedents. The policy shall include tasks to be completed prior to disposition: collect fingerprints, take photographs, document clothing and personal effects, examine and chart dentition, conduct postmortem imaging, and retain specimens for DNA. + | Yes | No |
| k. The agency shall establish scientific identification on all suspected homicides, when possible. + | Yes | No |
| l. The agency shall establish scientific identification on all burned, severely decomposed decedents and on those who are visually unidentifiable, when scientifically possible. + | Yes | No |
| m. The agency shall request that a forensic autopsy be performed on all unidentified decedents, except for skeletal remains, which the forensic pathologist may defer to a forensic anthropologist. + | Yes | No |
| n. The agency shall have a written policy regarding reassociation of partial remains recovered independently, including entry into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs.gov). + | Yes | No |
| o. The agency shall have a written policy related to disposition of commingled remains and notification of next of kin. + | Yes | No |
| p. The agency shall have a written policy prohibiting the cremation or other permanent disposition of unidentified remains. + | Yes | No |

3. Written and Supporting Documentation

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| a. Circumstances of death shall be documented on all reported cases. + | Yes | No |
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| b. The agency shall have a written policy requiring medicolegal death investigators to complete a comprehensive written investigative report on all accepted cases, including the initial history of the fatal event, the essential facts and circumstances of the case, decedent "histories" (when appropriate), and any witness accounts.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. The agency shall have a written policy requiring circumstantial and physical observations to be documented regarding the time of death.+ | Yes | No | |
| d. Investigative scene information, circumstances, and reports shall be available to the forensic pathologist prior to autopsy.+ | Yes | No | |
| e. Copies of death certificates certified by the agency shall be included in the case file or easily retrievable.+ | Yes | No | |
| f. Medical records shall be obtained on all jurisdictional cases when necessary.+ | Yes | No | |
| g. The agency should routinely obtain copies of first responders' reports (e.g., emergency medical services [EMS], fire, law enforcement, witness statement). | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. Investigative reports shall include 911 call time, agency contact time, and scene arrival and departure times.+ | Yes | No | |
| i. The agency shall document the notification of next of kin (who, where, when).+ | Yes | No | |
| j. The agency shall have a written policy ensuring that autopsy reports are not altered by parties other than the authoring forensic pathologist.+ | Yes | No | |

4. Photographic Documentation

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|--|-----|----|--|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the use, security, and storage of case photographs (including edit tracking).+ | Yes | No | |
| b. Photographic media shall be secured and retrievable by case number.+ | Yes | No | |



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| c. Investigative scene photographs shall be available to the forensic pathologist prior to autopsy. + | Yes | No |
| d. The agency shall have a written policy requiring medicolegal death investigators to take scene photographs independent from other investigative agencies. + | Yes | No |
| e. Close-up (identification) facial photographs shall be taken of all decedents physically examined. + | Yes | No |
| f. Intermediate (orientation) photographs shall be taken at all scenes (e.g., to establish decedent condition, clothing, and position in relation to the overall scene). + | Yes | No |
| g. Distant photographs shall be taken at all scenes (e.g., to document the environment). + | Yes | No |
| h. The agency shall take photographs with and without scales in cases when no frame of reference is present. + | Yes | No |
| i. The agency shall have a written policy regarding digital media storage and backup schedules (i.e., off-site storage). + | Yes | No |
| j. The agency shall have a written policy regarding photograph retention. + | Yes | No |



C. Morgue Facilities

1. Decedent Handling and Transport

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|---|-----|----|-----|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the tagging and labeling of the decedent and body bag for transportation.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The agency shall have a written policy regarding safely handling the decedent, including biohazard precautions.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. Decedents and/or body bags shall be appropriately tagged and secured prior to transport on all suspicious deaths (for chain of custody).+ | Yes | No | |
| d. Body bags should be utilized in all cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the agency. | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. Decedent transport vehicles shall be clean and properly maintained (regardless of ownership).+ | Yes | No | |
| f. Decedent transport stretchers shall be in good working condition and cleaned regularly (regardless of ownership).+ | Yes | No | |
| g. Removal of a decedent (from the scene and from vehicles) shall be handled in a dignified manner.+ | Yes | No | |
| h. The agency should have access to bariatric equipment for transport, inspection, and autopsy of obese decedents. | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The agency shall have a written policy for unclaimed remains, including the determination of the decedent's veteran status.+ | Yes | No | |
| j. Decedents shall be stored in a temperature-controlled and secure environment (once removed from the scene).+ | Yes | No | |
| k. The agency shall have access to tools and equipment (i.e., light sources, shovels, stokes baskets) for remote or complicated recoveries. This could include agreements with law enforcement and fire departments.+ | Yes | No | |



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| I. The agency should have access to shields or pop-ups to protect the decedent from the environment and public view while scene investigations are being performed. | Yes | No | N/A |
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2. Body Receiving/Releasing Areas

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|--|-----|----|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the receiving and releasing of decedents. + | Yes | No |
| b. The decedent receiving and handling area shall be secure and protected from public view. + | Yes | No |
| c. The decedent receiving area shall be of adequate size to accommodate the caseload. + | Yes | No |
| d. All surface areas, floors, and walls in the decedent receiving area shall be clean. + | Yes | No |
| e. Decedent scales shall be available, operational, calibrated, and maintained according to manufacturer specifications. + | Yes | No |

3. Refrigeration

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| a. The refrigerated storage space shall be accessible to the autopsy and decedent receiving areas. + | Yes | No |
| b. The refrigerated storage space shall be sufficient to maintain a normal caseload. + | Yes | No |
| c. Temperature gauges shall be operable and checked regularly by agency personnel. + | Yes | No |
| d. Temperatures shall be recorded or logged on a schedule by agency personnel. + | Yes | No |
| e. Cooler and freezer units shall have temperature-monitoring alarms that notify appropriate individual(s) when any required temperatures go out of the set range. + | Yes | No |



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| f. Refrigeration units shall contain enough shelving and table space so that decedents are not stacked or stored on the floor. + | Yes | No |
| g. The agency shall have a written policy regarding decedent storage capacity increases during case surges (i.e., holidays, mass fatalities, environmental disasters). + | Yes | No |

4. Autopsy Facility

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|--|-----|----|
| a. The agency shall have written morgue policies available within proximity of the autopsy area. + | Yes | No |
| b. If the agency does not manage an autopsy facility, that facilities shall be accredited by a recognized accrediting agency (e.g. IACME, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations [JCAHO], National Association of Medical Examiners [NAME]). NOTE: If autopsy facility is not accredited, it will be subjected to inspection. + | Yes | No |
| c. Personnel changing areas shall contain showers. + | Yes | No |
| d. Areas and equipment used for dissection (autopsy tables, body carts, etc.) shall be maintained and in good operating condition. + | Yes | No |
| e. The calibration and maintenance of all organ scales, scientific equipment, suction devices, and other pieces of equipment shall be performed and documented per manufacturer specifications. + | Yes | No |
| f. First aid kits, naloxone, safety showers, and eyewash stations shall be available in autopsy area(s) and in good working order. + | Yes | No |
| g. Ventilation system(s) in the autopsy area(s) shall adequately control odors. + | Yes | No |
| h. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face protection, chest and arm protection, gloves, shoe covers, N95 masks, and powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs), shall be available to personnel. + | Yes | No |
| i. The autopsy area shall be clean, with adequate lighting and an appropriate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. + | Yes | No |



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| j. Adequate space and equipment for tissue cutting and histology preparation shall be available.† | Yes | No |
| k. A space shall be designated for tissue storage and a method utilized to control odors.† | Yes | No |
| l. The autopsy area shall be able to accommodate normal and peak caseload, including the standard complement of autopsy and laboratory personnel, as well as official participants or observers from cooperating agencies.† | Yes | No |
| m. Safety data sheets (SDSs) shall be available in areas where chemicals are stored.† | Yes | No |
| n. A building diagram with evacuation routes clearly noted shall be posted in the autopsy area(s).† | Yes | No |

5. Forensic Autopsy Procedures

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|---|-----|----|
| a. The agency shall have a written policy regarding postmortem examination procedures.† | Yes | No |
| b. The agency shall have a written policy specifying the criteria for determination of when full autopsies, partial autopsies, or external examinations are to be performed.† | Yes | No |
| c. The agency shall have a written policy regarding evidence collection during postmortem examination procedures.† | Yes | No |
| d. The agency shall have a written policy regarding tissue and fluid specimen collection.† | Yes | No |
| e. The agency shall have a written policy regarding evidence and specimen disposition and destruction.† | Yes | No |
| f. Circumstances of death, if known, shall be available to the forensic pathologist prior to autopsy.† | Yes | No |
| g. Fingerprints and DNA samples shall be taken on all cases, when possible.† | Yes | No |



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| h. Unidentified cases shall have the following tests performed, when possible: fingerprints, dental examinations, postmortem imaging, forensic anthropology, and DNA analysis. + | Yes | No |
| i. Postmortem images shall be taken on the following case types: all infants and children, suspected homicides, charred remains, remains when decomposition obscures or causes loss of identifying features, and/or evidence of trauma. + | Yes | No |
| j. All collected specimen containers shall be labeled and logged with unique identifier(s), the name of the collector, sample type, and the date and time of collection. + | Yes | No |
| k. The agency shall have a written policy regarding chain of custody utilized in capturing all biological specimens and other evidence collected during the postmortem examination. + | Yes | No |
| l. Autopsy photographs shall be taken to record the postmortem examination. + | Yes | No |
| m. Facial (close-up) identification photographs shall be taken, labeled, and saved for all cases. + | Yes | No |
| n. Autopsies shall be performed in greater than 95% of suspected homicides. + | Yes | No |
| o. Autopsies shall be performed in greater than 95% of all cases in which the suspected manner of death is undetermined. + | Yes | No |
| p. A forensic pathologist shall personally examine all external aspects of the decedent before dissection. + | Yes | No |
| q. A forensic pathologist shall be responsible for performing or directly supervising each postmortem examination, the diagnoses made, the opinions formed, and any subsequent opinion testimony. + | Yes | No |



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| r. | A forensic pathologist shall personally perform or directly supervise all autopsy dissections.† | Yes | No | |
| s. | All autopsy technicians shall work in the physical presence of, and under the direct supervision of, a forensic pathologist.† | Yes | No | |
| t. | Specimens shall be routinely retained for toxicological and histological examination during autopsies.† | Yes | No | |
| u. | The agency shall have a written policy covering the retention and disposition of organ and tissue specimens taken at autopsy that addresses whether, or under what circumstances, next of kin are to be notified.† | Yes | No | |
| v. | The agency should ensure that touch DNA is collected on suspicious cases in areas suspected to have been touched by the perpetrator (ankles, neck, wrists, etc.). | Yes | No | N/A |
| w. | The agency shall have a written policy requiring an autopsy on suspected drug toxicity deaths. Exceptions may be made for cases that have a positive presumptive test from the decedent's body fluids, or cases that would undergo an external examination were it not necessary to rule out drug intoxication (e.g. significant medical history, over a certain established age, or obvious fatal trauma). In these cases, an external examination may be completed and must be completed by a forensic pathologist with a subsequent toxicology panel and quantification, to determine cause of death without an autopsy.† | Yes | No | |
| x. | The agency shall have access to cardiac pathologists and neuropathologists if needed, as well as genetic testing for postmortem samples.† | Yes | No | |
| y. | The agency shall have access to infectious disease testing.† | Yes | No | |
| z. | The agency shall have access to basic chemistry panels and metabolic screening panels (e.g. glucose, potassium) for postmortem samples.† | Yes | No | |
| aa. | Suspected bite marks/pattern injuries of dental origin shall be processed according to procedures consistent with forensic odontology practice as established by American Board of Forensic Odontology [ABFO].† | Yes | No | |



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| ab. The agency shall document all individuals present at each autopsy (participants and observers), including their agency name and contact information. + | Yes | No |
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6. Forensic Autopsy Procedures (Suspected Sexual Assault)

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|---|-----|----|
| a. Sexual assault kits shall be available and specimens collected when necessary. + | Yes | No |
| b. In suspected sexual assault cases, control hair samples shall be collected from the decedent by plucking a representative number of hairs from various body areas (e.g., scalp, pubic area). + | Yes | No |
| c. In suspected sexual assault cases, the pubic area shall be lightly combed to obtain loose and foreign hairs, and these hairs shall be packaged separately from the control hairs. + | Yes | No |
| d. In suspected sexual assault cases, swabs of body orifices shall be obtained and examined for the presence of spermatozoa, seminal fluid, DNA, and/or serologic markers. + | Yes | No |



D. Laboratory Services

1. Radiology Services

- | | | | |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| a. The agency shall have access to postmortem imaging equipment (e.g., X-ray, computed tomography [CT]). + | Yes | No | |
| b. The postmortem imaging equipment should be in a convenient location near the autopsy room. | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The postmortem imaging equipment shall be shielded in accordance with radiation safety standards. + | Yes | No | |
| d. The postmortem imaging viewing devices shall be available to the forensic pathologist. + | Yes | No | |
| e. The postmortem imaging equipment shall be operational, and personnel shall be properly trained to operate it. + | Yes | No | |
| f. Exposure tags (dosimeters) shall be mandatory for all personnel working in the immediate area of the postmortem imaging equipment. + | Yes | No | |

2. Toxicology Laboratory Services

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|---|-----|----|--|
| a. The agency shall use an accredited forensic toxicology laboratory. + | Yes | No | |
| b. A toxicology laboratory report shall be issued for each case that is analyzed. + | Yes | No | |
| c. The agency shall have a written policy regarding the collection and storage of toxicology specimens. + | Yes | No | |
| d. The agency shall have a written policy describing the criteria for ordering toxicology tests. + | Yes | No | |
| e. The agency shall maintain statistics regarding turnaround times for toxicology test results. + | Yes | No | |
| f. Of all toxicology reports, 90% shall be completed within 90 calendar days of case submission. + | Yes | No | |



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- g. Of all toxicology reports, 90% should be completed within 60 calendar days of case submission. Yes No N/A

3. Crime and Other Laboratory Services

- a. Crime Laboratory services shall be available to perform fingerprinting, serologic and/or DNA testing, ballistics testing, and trace evidence examination. + Yes No
- b. The crime laboratory shall be accredited (e.g. ANSI National Accreditation Board [ANAB]). + Yes No
- c. Histology services shall be performed by a certified or accredited laboratory. + Yes No



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E. Forensic Specialists

1. Forensic Pathologists

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|---|-----|----|-----|
| a. Board-certified forensic pathologists (American Board of Pathology [ABP]) shall perform/supervise forensic autopsies.+ | Yes | No | |
| b. The forensic pathologist(s) shall be licensed to practice medicine in the state in which they practice.+ | Yes | No | |
| c. The licensure of the forensic pathologist(s) shall be verified annually.+ | Yes | No | |
| d. The forensic pathologist shall prepare or oversee the preparation of a postmortem examination report for each decedent examined.+ | Yes | No | |
| e. Of all autopsy reports, 80% shall be completed within 90 calendar days of autopsy performance, to account for forensic pathologist and administrative review.+ | Yes | No | |
| f. Of all autopsy reports, 80% should be completed within 60 calendar days of autopsy performance. | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. Numbers of medical personnel should be sufficient so that no forensic pathologist is required to perform more than 400 autopsies per year (total by forensic pathologist, inside and outside cases included). External examinations and cases where they provide supervision (e.g. pathologists' assistants, residents, fellows) are converted at a rate of 4:1. | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. The agency should have a written policy regarding contracting with additional forensic pathologists (as needed). | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The agency shall require and support opportunities for annual continuing medical education (CME) for forensic pathologists on staff.+ | Yes | No | |

2. Other Forensic Specialists

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|--|
| a. If pathologists' assistants are utilized, the agency shall utilize pathologists' assistants certified by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP).+ | Yes | No | |
| b. Utilization of a pathologists' assistants shall be solely at the discretion of the forensic pathologist.+ | Yes | No | |



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| c. The use of certified pathologists' assistants for forensic autopsies shall be limited to cases believed to be non-criminal and non-suspicious. + | Yes | No |
| d. Pathologists' assistants shall not perform autopsies on any deaths in custody, deaths involving any law enforcement activity, or decedents younger than age 18. + | Yes | No |
| e. Autopsies performed by pathologists' assistants shall be directly supervised by a board-certified forensic pathologist who shall sign off on all reports. Direct supervision includes the presence of the board-certified forensic pathologist at the outset and conclusion of the autopsy. + | Yes | No |
| f. Cases completed by pathologists' assistants under forensic pathologist supervision shall not exceed 25% (after conversion) of that forensic pathologist's total caseload. + | Yes | No |
| g. The agency shall have a written policy regarding access to forensic specialist support services. (e.g., botany, radiology, forensic genealogy, entomology). + | Yes | No |
| h. The agency shall have a written policy describing cases that require contacting forensic specialists. + | Yes | No |
| i. The agency shall utilize American Board of Forensic Odontology [ABFO], board-certified forensic odontologists. + | Yes | No |
| j. The agency shall utilize American Board of Forensic Anthropology [ABFA] board-certified forensic anthropologists. + | Yes | No |
| k. Forensic specialists shall be certified by an accredited agency or association if an agency or association exists (e.g., Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board [FSAB] accredited). + | Yes | No |
| l. Forensic specialists shall be required to submit a written report for all casework performed. + | Yes | No |