

**Fundamental Tasks of Medicolegal Death Investigation**

1. Interagency Communication
  - a. Jurisdiction  
Understand jurisdiction of the medical examiner/ coroner and of the decedent and scene
  - b. Collect Essential Information  
Establish decedent profile and determine essential information
  - c. Interact with Law Enforcement  
Establish a cooperative relationship and understand their responsibilities and duties
  - d. Interact with Funeral Homes  
Establish a cooperative relationship and understand their responsibilities and duties
  - e. Interact with Media  
Understand how to communicate with the media
  - f. Ancillary Agencies  
Knowledge of agencies that work alongside the medical examiner/ coroner
  - g. Release of Information  
Knowledge of HIPAA compliance and legal aspects of releasing information
2. Communication with Families
  - a. Death Notification  
Knowledge of how to appropriately notify next of kin
  - b. Obtain Information  
Understand what information is essential to collect from family and how to obtain the information
  - c. Identification Viewing  
Understand how to prepare families for the condition of the decedent upon viewing
  - d. Inform of Procedures  
Knowledge of what procedures the family should be aware of during and after the investigation
  - e. Recognize Reactions  
Knowledge of common reactions of family members during and after the investigation
  - f. Facilitate Requests  
Knowledge of how to facilitate and address requests made by family during and after the investigation
  - g. Report Findings  
Knowledge of how information should be released to the family during and after the investigation to include autopsy results
3. Scene Response and Documentation
  - a. Scene Arrival  
Understand the role of the medical examiner/ coroner on scene and the importance of collaboration
  - b. Securing the Scene  
Knowledge of how to properly secure a scene
  - c. Scene Safety  
Understand when a scene is considered safe

- d. Professionalism  
Understand the importance of professionalism while conducting investigations
  - e. Dignity of the Deceased  
Understand how to maintain dignity of the deceased throughout the investigation
  - f. Scene Equipment  
Knowledge of equipment commonly used during investigations to include PPE and cameras
  - g. Scene Photography  
Knowledge of proper scene photography techniques including what should be photographed
  - h. Scene Documentation  
Knowledge of how to properly and thoroughly document a scene
  - i. Scene Evidence  
Identification and collection of evidence and distinguishing from personal property
  - j. Effective Witness Interviews  
Knowledge of how to conduct interviews with witnesses during and after the investigation
4. Body Assessment and Documentation
- a. Body Photography  
Knowledge of proper body photography techniques including what should be photographed
  - b. Physical Assessment  
Knowledge of how to conduct a physical assessment of the body, to include the following:
    - i. Anatomy
    - ii. Resuscitative Artifacts
    - iii. Surgical Artifacts
    - iv. Postmortem Changes
    - v. Injury Recognition
5. Completing the Investigation
- a. Identification  
Knowledge of the proper and acceptable ways of identifying remains
  - b. Compose Investigative Narrative  
Knowledge of how to complete a clear, concise narrative report
  - c. Follow Up  
Knowledge of duties that need to be performed to complete an investigation to include:
    - i. follow up with other agencies
    - ii. complete required forms
    - iii. release of evidence and
    - iv. chain of custody
  - d. Interacting with Forensic Pathologists  
Knowledge of information needed for the Forensic Pathologist to determine the cause and manner of death or make other decisions in regards to the investigation process
  - e. Facilitate Organ and Tissue Donation

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- Knowledge of organ and tissue donation and the donation process
- f. Manners of Death
  - Knowledge of the different manners of death
- g. Certification of Death
  - Knowledge of the death certification process
- 6. Additional Medicolegal Death Investigator Duties
  - a. Health and Wellness
    - Recognition and maintenance of health and wellness
  - b. Unidentified/ Unclaimed Remains
    - Knowledge of disposition of unidentified and/ or unclaimed remains
  - c. Multiple Fatalities
    - Knowledge of proper response and scene processing involving multiple fatalities
  - d. Testimony
    - Knowledge of appropriate courtroom behavior, preparation, and types of testimony
- 7. Forensic and Medical Knowledge
  - a. Forensic Science
    - Knowledge of forensic science to include forensic specialties (e.g., ballistics, toxicology, entomology, anthropology, odontology, etc.)
  - b. Forensic Pathology
    - Knowledge of basic forensic pathology
  - c. Medical Knowledge
    - Understand basic medical terminology and disease processes