Coroner’s/Medical Examiner's Office

This chapter will cover:

- What they do
- Why they do it

- Coroner/Medical Examiner Information

Coroner/Medical Examiner Information

The mission of the Washoe County Medical Examiner/Coroner Office is to investigate unexpected and unexplained deaths and to determine the manner of death, date, time, cause, and classification.

The Coroner's investigation is not limited to the examination of the deceased, but may include interviews with family members and other witnesses, the collection of physical evidence and the safeguarding of personal property found at the death scene.

See more information at their website.

Is an Autopsy Necessary

Autopsies are performed only on those cases where it is required by law or where it is necessary to determine the cause of death.

What is an autopsy?

An autopsy is an examination of the deceased performed by a medical doctor. This examination is a professional surgical procedure that is carried out within the standards of competent medical practice.

Will we know the *cause of death* soon after the autopsy?

Not always. A cause of death most often takes in excess of 12-weeks to determine, particularly if toxicology tests are performed.

What do I do now?

Contact the funeral home and/or the funeral home consumer alliance group of your choice. They are prepared to provide you information so that you can make your own selections and decisions. They will coordinate with the Coroner to arrange the release of your loved one's remains from the Coroner's facility.

When can I have the funeral?

The Coroner's examination should not delay your funeral plans. The Coroner will complete their investigation as soon as possible.

What is required for the Coroner to release the remains/body & personal property?

The mortuary must provide the Coroner with a release form signed by the *legal next of kin*.

If the case is pending investigation, will it delay the funeral of my loved one?

No. Death certificates are not necessary for funerals. However, some financial, estate, probate or business matters may be dependent upon the final death certificate.

How can I obtain a certified copy of the death certificate?

Call the Washoe Co. Health Dept. at (775) 328-2455 or visit their office at 1001 E 9th St # B, Reno, NV 89512. For other areas within Nevada call 211 for death certificate information. There is a fee assessed by the County for birth/death certificates. Call the number provided above to get the most current pricing. You may qualify to obtain a death certificate if you are a direct family member by blood or marriage, the deceased person's guardian, or his or her legal representative. You must provide photo identification.