

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ▼
HUMAN RESOURCES ENTERPRISE

MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATOR

DEFINITION

Assists in the investigation of sudden, unnatural, suspicious, or violent deaths; acts as a liaison between the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner and county medical examiner offices, law, and other investigative agencies, families of decedents, and the general public; performs related work as required.

The Work Examples and Competencies listed are for illustrative purposes only and not intended to be the primary basis for position classification decisions.

WORK EXAMPLES

Receives reports of death for autopsy and helps determine if an autopsy is necessary; ensures decedent is properly identified/labeled and notifies the Forensic Pathologist, if necessary.

Collects evidence at the death/crime scene, including medical history, medications, psychological state at the time of death, weapons, etc. to help determine cause and manner of death; secures photographs/video of scene, interviews family members, friends, and witnesses of the deceased.

Confers with the physician of the deceased to determine previous medical, psychological, or psychiatric history; obtains/reviews medical and dental records of the deceased, investigative reports from outside agencies and assists the Forensic Pathologists with the identification of deceased.

Locates/notifies next-of-kin or legal representatives of death and provide the basic level of "at-need" grief counseling to family members or those closely affected at the death scene; responds to inquiries from family members of the deceased, investigative agencies, the media and the general public; helps facilitate organ donation in applicable cases.

Gathers information to determine whether to accept or decline jurisdiction in cases of death; when jurisdiction is assumed, arrange for labeling and transportation of the body to the medical examiner facility.

Works closely with local, state, and federal investigative agencies and advises law enforcement personnel and county medical examiners regarding death scene investigation and the procedures of the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner.

Prepares detailed reports analyzing the circumstances of death and pertinent information regarding the deceased; complete any follow-up reports or report addendums as required by the Chief Medical Examiner or Director of Forensic Operations.

Testifies in both civil and criminal courts when subpoenaed.

Maintains proper documentation and chain of custody of evidence, clothing, personal effects, and the deceased individuals and maintains logbooks/records used during assisting with autopsies and performing investigations; maintains state vehicles (oil changes, service, etc.) and associated logbooks. Assists Autopsy Technicians with maintaining the inventory of autopsy and office supplies.

Attends postmortem examinations and assists the Forensic Pathologist/Autopsy Technician in the weighing of organs and collection/delivery of toxicology, histology and microbiology specimens to the appropriate laboratory; helps with the collection, preservation, and transfer of evidence to the State Crime Laboratory; prepare labels for specimens/evidence collected during the examination, fingerprint the body; and help with the moving/undressing of bodies; notifying funeral homes for return of deceased individuals to families and maintaining a clean autopsy suite.

COMPETENCIES REQUIRED

- Knowledge of the principles and practices of forensic death investigation.
- Knowledge of the legal provisions concerning collection and admission of evidence in court.
- Knowledge of Iowa laws as they pertain to the state medicolegal system.
- Ability to demonstrate appropriate forensic autopsy techniques.
- Ability to compose detailed reports for submission to the Chief Medical Examiner.
- Ability to interview witnesses and family members.
- Ability to view situations with objectivity.
- Ability to follow written and verbal directions and to complete assigned tasks on schedule.
- Ability to understand basic mathematics.
- Ability to work independently or as part of a team and interact appropriately with others.
- Ability to perform routine office/clerical functions (typing, photocopying, data entry, etc.).
- Ability to apply procedures using good judgment.
- Must be able to tolerate and work in hazardous environments, handle sights, sounds, and odors in a sometimes stressful environment.
- Displays high standards of ethical conduct. Refrains from dishonest behavior.
- Works and communicates with all clients and customers providing quality professional service.
- Displays a high level of initiative, effort, attention to detail and commitment by completing assignments efficiently with minimal supervision.
- Follows policy, cooperates with supervisors and aligns behavior with the goals of the organization.
- Fosters and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, group identity and team spirit throughout the organization.
- Exchanges information with individuals or groups effectively by listening and responding appropriately.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice, nursing, medicine, or other health-related or criminal justice-related fields;

OR

Licensure as a Registered Nurse in the State of Iowa by the Iowa Board of Nursing.

NOTES

The incumbent will be required to attend the St. Louis University School of Medicine's Basic and Master' Courses of Death Investigation.

The incumbent will be required to attain the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation, Inc. Registry Level of certification within two years of employment.

The incumbent must have a valid Iowa driver's license.

This position requires that the incumbent be able to travel at a moment's notice (24 hours a day) anywhere within the state of Iowa.

The incumbent must be willing to accommodate a work schedule of 24-hour-per-day on-call coverage for the office.

The incumbent must be able to move approximately 100 pounds by oneself. Must be able to assist in moving heavier objects/bodies.

The incumbent must be willing to coordinate on-call schedules with other investigators and be willing to share holiday on-call status as required.

Effective Date: 1/12 SG