



POLICY & PROCEDURES

HOLMEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **DEATH INVESTIGATIONS**

NUMBER: 4.1

SCOPE: ALL DEPARTMENT PERSONEL

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PURPOSE

This order establishes guidelines for death situation investigations and the completion of subsequent reports.

POLICY

It is Department policy to thoroughly investigate each death that is brought to member's attention and to document details in a report which follows guidelines in this order.

DISCUSSION

While most death calls are the result of natural causes, the possibility of foul play or an accident must be considered. This order identifies key issues that should be explored at death scenes and documented in reports.

I. PROCEDURES.

- A. General Investigation.
 - a. An officer **SHALL** be assigned to investigate **ALL** non-hospice deaths that they are notified of.
 - b. Supervisors will determine if the case requires major case investigation, such as:
 - i. Homicide.
 - ii. Suicide.
 - iii. Infant death under 2yrs old.
 - iv. Poisoning.
 - v. Traffic accident fatality
 - vi. Unexplained, unusual or suspicious deaths.
 - vii. Death resulting from a crime or member actions.
 - c. Deaths occurring as described below do NOT require Investigative personnel.
 - i. Physician verification: death due to natural causes.
 - ii. Deceased in hospice dies from diagnosed illness.
 - iii. Deceased is a nursing home/medical facility resident and death is diagnosed due to natural causes.
- B. Medical Examiner (ME) Notification.
 - a. The ME **SHALL** be notified in all deaths.
 - b. Responding officer will have LCCEDC notify the ME.
- C. Anatomical Gifts: Make a reasonable search of the individual for a record of gift or a record of refusal or other information identifying the individual as donor or as individual who has refused to make an anatomical gift.
 - d. If any such record is located and the person is being sent to the hospital, the officer shall send the record or gift or record of refusal to the hospital.
- D. Investigative guidelines contained in Annex A **SHALL** be part of death investigations conducted by this Department.

**DEATH INVESTIGATION GUIDE
HOLMEN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

*In every death investigation, the following observations **SHALL** be documented in required report narratives.*

CATEGORIES/TOPICS TO COVER IN REPORTS/INFORMATION TO OBTAIN DONE

- IDENTIFICATION OF DECEASED:**
How identified or how identification will be made. ()
- EVIDENCE OF CRIME.** ()
- LOCATION OF BODY:** geographic location, area description. ()
- PHOTOGRAPH THE SCENE:** scale photos of the scene ()
- POSITION OF BODY.** ()
- CONDITION OF BODY:** preserved, decomposed, rigor mortise, color ()
- CLOTHING DESCRIPTION:** type, color, condition, fully/partially. ()
- WOUNDS:** location and type. ()
- WEAPONS PRESENT:** description. ()
- MEDICATIONS PRESENT:** type, prescription, medical history. ()
- EVIDENCE OF DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE:** type, amount, paraphernalia. ()
- EVIDENCE OF UNUSUAL SEXUAL PRACTICES.** ()
- PROPERTY:** evidence, turned over to medical examiner, kin. ()
- CONDITION OF SURROUNDINGS:** orderly/untidy, odors, lighting, entry, communications devices present i.e cell phones, computers. ()
- DATED MATERIAL:** mail, newspapers, deliveries, collections. ()
- EVIDENCE OF LAST FOOD PREPARATION:** where, type, uneaten. ()
- WEATHER/TEMPERATURE:** excessive, in/outside, general conditions. ()
- PERSON LOCATING DECEASED:** name, address, phone, interview circumstances ()
- LAST CONTACT WITH DECEASED:** people at time of death, unusual comments, behavior, fears, threats, who, when, where, anyone leave. ()
- NEXT OF KIN:** interviews, name, address, phone, notification. ()
- AMBULANCE/RESCUE PERSONNEL:** who, what service, their observations. ()
- MEDICAL EXAMINER NOTIFICATION:** when, by who, arrival time. ()
- DISPOSITION OF BODY:** medical examiner, morgue, funeral home. ()
- OTHER:** unusual, odd, unexplainable or out of the ordinary. ()
- SUMMARY:** of the investigation, officer's narrative. (report) ()

Chief of Police
Shane Collins