

What is an Autopsy?

An autopsy is an intricate medical procedure often requiring complex laboratory tests. The autopsy report is finalized when all test results are available to determine the cause and manner of death (30-90 days). An autopsy does NOT interfere with the final viewing and funeral of the deceased. Funeral directors prepare a body after autopsy according to the wishes of the family.

Why is an Autopsy Performed?

Autopsy results document the condition of the body at the time of death. This information helps families file insurance claims especially when a distinction must be made between natural and accidental death. Autopsy results also assist the legal system in establishing material facts in homicide cases, thus protecting the final rights of the deceased and his or her surviving family. Autopsy results serve to answer part of the puzzle of suicide cases that involve investigation of all the circumstances surrounding the death.

How do I find a funeral home?

The Medical Examiner's Office is not permitted to recommend a funeral home to families. Funeral homes may be found in the phone book, via the internet, or based on recommendation from family members and friends.

What if I can't afford a funeral home?

An indigent case should be referred as follows:

Duval or Clay County:

Eternity Funeral Home
4856 Oakdale Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32207
(904) 348-5579

Nassau County:

Oxley Heard Funeral Home
1305 Atlantic Avenue
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034
(904) 261-3644

Hamilton or Columbia County:

Medical Examiner's Office
Investigations Division
(904) 255-4003



OTHER IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Vital Statistics – Jacksonville: (904) 253-1620
Vital Statistics – Florida: (904) 359-6955
JSO Non-emergency Number (904) 630-0500

THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

ANSWERS FOR THE FAMILY



*Serving Duval, Nassau, Clay,
Hamilton, and Columbia Counties*

2100 Jefferson Street
Jacksonville, FL 32206-3534
(904) 255-4000 phone
(904) 630-0964 Fax

www.coj.net

We understand at this emotional time it may be very difficult to think of questions to ask the Medical Examiner's Office. Please accept our condolences for your loss .

Why is the Medical Examiner's Office Involved?

Florida statutes dictate the types of cases in which the Medical Examiner will be involved. A Medical Examiner can often discover hidden evidence of injury to explain a sudden death, or can document natural diseases to show that no foul play was involved in the death. Government and private agencies, as well as, families rely on the medical examiner's findings to resolve issues regarding deaths.

What is the first thing we should do?

The legal next of kin should select a funeral home and notify the Funeral Director that the death is being handled by the Medical Examiner's Office. A form must be signed by the legally authorized person in order for the decedent's body to be released to the funeral home. Florida Statute 497.005 lists the legally

Is it necessary for me to come to the Medical Examiner's Office to identify the body?

No, in most cases this will be done through the selected funeral home.

Is viewing allowed?

Viewing is prohibited at our office due to biological risk. Bodies can be available for viewing at the selected funeral home.

How may I obtain an autopsy report?

Autopsy reports may be requested in writing via email or regular mail. Please include the name of the decedent, date of birth (if known) and the date of death. For mail requests, please include a self-addressed business envelope with postage for 2 ounces to:

Medical Examiner's Office
2100 Jefferson Street
Jacksonville, FL 32206-3534
meorecords@coj.net

How do I Obtain a Copy of the Death Certificate?

Contact your funeral home or contact the Office of Vital Statistics either at the County (in which the death occurred) or at the State Vital Statistics Office.



How do I obtain personal effects?

For the convenience of the family, personal effects are generally released to the funeral home at the time of the decedents release. However, the next-of-kin may pickup personal effects at the Medical Examiner's Office during normal business hours if the property has not been retained by law enforcement as evidence.

PROOF OF IDENTIFICATION IS REQUIRED!!