

CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

Performs post mortem examinations to determine the cause and manner of death and, if necessary, the identity of deceased individuals. Performs responsible administrative work and forensic medical work for Clark County. An employee in this classification actively practices forensic pathology. Work includes but is not limited to forensic medical duties (investigations to determine cause(s) of sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious, or unnatural deaths in adherence with applicable laws). The incumbent must exercise initiative and independent judgment in adapting standards, methods, and procedures to fit conditions and achieve established goals. The Chief Medical Examiner supervises employees in the Associate Medical Examiner classification and provides training and supervision of employees in the Autopsy Technician classification.

CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS

The Chief Medical Examiner, a single incumbent position, is responsible for fulfilling all statutory and operational duties, works in conjunction with the Operations Manager in editing policies and procedures, and assists with maintaining accreditation for the department. This position has broad responsibility and considerable latitude for independent judgment and works autonomously in the performance of daily activities.

KEY OR TYPICAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Performs timely post mortem examinations, retaining samples, specimens, and tissues necessary for analysis, examination, and documentation as prescribed by existing practices of forensic pathology
- Prepares detailed technical examination reports using appropriate reporting form and convention; ensures the confidentiality of all reports and records of autopsies or post mortem examinations.
- Issues preliminary reports in writing, of the cause of death where such determination is not dependent upon further investigation
- Keeps and maintains appropriate records, reports, and other documentation regarding investigations as well as physical evidence transferred from other investigative agencies
- Provides supervision for Associate Medical Examiner and Autopsy Technician staff. In coordination with the Operations Manager, directs the hiring of incumbent(s) in the Associate Medical Examiner classification
- Plans, directs and evaluates the work of subordinates

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- May request, within budget constraints, arrangements for other investigative services not available as customary or usual from the County, e.g. anthropology, energy dispersive X-ray analysis, DNA testing, etc., at County expense as necessary
- Confers with and provides expert testimony on cases performed as required by the Sheriff, Prosecuting Attorney and other law enforcement officials
- Assists in the maintenance of office accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME)
- In conjunction with the Operations Manager, directs the development and implementation of departmental goals and objectives, policies, procedures, and work standards for the Office and evaluates the Office's efficiency
- Visits the scene of death, or discovery of remains to provide professional assistance as necessary
- Follows policy and protocol for handling of organs and tissues, and appropriate handling of bodies and items found on or about said bodies, and collections of unclaimed bodies
- Recommends and assists in the implementation of goals and objectives and assists with establishing schedules and methods for providing medical examiner services
- Participates in the preparation and administration of the Medical Examiner's Office budget and submission of budget recommendations
- May meet with family members of decedents as requested
- May train or ensure training of Medical Examiner staff
- May participate in the education and training of medical students, resident physicians, and other allied health professionals
- Works non-standard hours as needed
- Performs other related duties as required

QUALIFICATIONS

- Must possess a Washington MD/DO license and be Board Certified; from the American Board of Pathology in Forensic Pathology.

Knowledge of: Operations, services and activities of a death investigation center; pathology and forensic pathology procedures to include both medical and legal aspects surrounding sudden and unnatural death; methods, practices, equipment and procedures of handling deceased individuals; data collection, statistical analysis and report writing principles and techniques; laws, rules, and regulations affecting certification of death, release of bodies, custody of the property of deceased persons and related matters; medical examiner office accreditation requirements.

Ability to: Prepare detailed technical reports; solve complex investigations of death; use strong interpersonal skills, including ability to interact and cooperate with co-workers and to deal effectively with law enforcement personnel, attorneys, court personnel, elected officials and the general public; communicate effectively both orally and in writing; positively represents the County, maintaining the trust County residents have placed in our local government. Demonstrates honest and ethical behaviors.

WORK ENVIRONMENT & PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Incumbent typically works in a climate-controlled laboratory area requiring employee to handle biological evidence and work with chemicals, fumes and odors from lab chemicals. Additionally, incumbent may work in an office setting for purposes of documentation and report writing; and may possibly be subjected to adverse weather and environment conditions when responding to an occasional crime scene. Work involves management of multiple priorities and can involve face-to-face interactions in stressful or sensitive situations.

Essential tasks: strength, agility, and manual dexterity of standing, walking, lifting, pulling, pushing, typing/keyboarding, etc. are essential physical demands required to perform post mortem examinations and complete necessary forms and reports on findings. Driving a vehicle to and from crime scenes, seminars, training classes, conferences, and meetings. Sensory tasks of seeing, reading, speaking, hearing and smelling are essential for execution of duties when performing post mortem examinations and communicating with law enforcement and court personnel, elected officials, co-workers, general public, etc.