

## **DEATH INVESTIGATOR, LEAD**

### **JOB PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

This position serves as a working lead for the Death Investigators within the Medical Examiner's office. To assist the Medical Examiner with the operational flow between investigations and pathology assistance. To assist the Operations Manager with scheduling and coordination of Death Investigator work assignments, technical training, guidance, and direction.

### **CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS**

### **KEY OR TYPICAL TASKS OR RESPONSIBILITIES** (including but not limited to the following):

- Serves as mentor and role model for subordinates regarding compliance with the office policies, procedures, and values. Serves to maintain and improve the quality, productivity, efficiency, and safety of Death Investigators' work performance.
- In coordination and support of the Operations Manager, plans, assigns, and schedules work consistent with department policies and procedures, quality control, safety measures, performance goals, and the daily workload and time demands; monitors and inspects work production and quality to ensure timely completion and compliance with instructions, procedures, and standards; enforces safety rules and regulations; and provides coverage as necessary for shift vacancies and during emergency situations.
- Provides technical consultation, assistance and guidance, day to day coaching, and on the job training to investigators and new employees; analyzes employee training needs; develops schedules and conducts training programs; participates in death investigation seminars; and assists Operations Manager with preparation of employee evaluations and other personnel related matters.
- Assists in the development and implementation of approved policies, procedures, and guidelines related to specific work group functions and for multi-fatality event; participates in and evaluates simulated disaster drills.
- Receives notification of deaths and determines jurisdiction within the Medical Examiner's Office standard guidelines.
- Responds to investigate death; drives to death scenes to perform initial on-scene examination of remains; takes digital images; records scene observations (written summary and diagram); interviews witnesses; collects, preserves, and transports evidence; and obtains demographic information that is pertinent to the cause and manner of death and death certificate completion.

- Interacts with healthcare practitioners to obtain confidential medical history and records of the decedent. Reviews medical records of the decedent.
- Interacts with law enforcement officials in the appropriate exchange of investigative information related to death investigations.
- Lifts and loads human remains onto a gurney for transport from death scenes, hospitals, and other care facilities and transports remains to the Medical Examiner's Office. Lifts and removes loaded gurneys from transport vehicle.
- Identifies and locates next of kin or legal representative of the decedent and makes death notifications. Removes personal items from bodies and catalogues and secures personal items for later release to family or appropriate representative of the decedent.
- Performs thorough investigations and prepares clear, concise, and comprehensive investigative reports of the circumstances of the death, social and medical history, and other information relevant to the death. Performs follow-up investigations to obtain additional information needed for finalization of investigative reports.
- Answers telephones within the Medical Examiner's Office responding to questions from the public, medical professionals, law enforcement, and families.
- Impartially facilitates disposition of remains through consultation with families, funeral homes, and others.
- Provides pre-trial interviews, depositions, and court testimony.
- Assists in autopsies on an as needed basis.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Experience and Training:**

An Associate's Degree is required with work experience performing criminal, civil, and/or death investigations. A Bachelor's Degree is preferred with work experience performing criminal, civil, and/or death investigations. Any equivalent combination of education or experience in medical, criminal justice, or related fields that would demonstrate the ability to perform the requirements of the position will be considered.

### **Special Requirements:**

Possession of a valid driver's license that is unrestricted, except as to vision correction, from state of residence and evidence of a safe driving record.

Successfully pass a background investigation (including a criminal records check and fingerprinting), drug screen, physical abilities test, and psychological examination.

Carry an employer-issued cell phone and pager while on shift.

Work as a team member and independently utilize strong decision making and critical thinking skills that are within the scope of this position.

Work variable shifts to include: nights, afternoons, days, holidays, weekends, and emergency situations. May be on on-call status 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Must possess or attain American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigator (ABMDI) Registry Certification within 24 months of date of appointment to position.

**Knowledge of:** interviewing, criminal investigation, and identification procedures and techniques; methods, practices, equipment, and procedures involved in handling human remains; human anatomy and physiological functions of the human body; data collection; report writing and principles; procedures necessary to prepare a body for autopsy and to assist during an autopsy; and pertinent federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations.

**Ability to:** communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing; prepare clear, concise but thorough, grammatically correct written reports; work in an unpredictable environment that may be at times stressful and exhibit appropriate sensitivity in situations involving relatives and friends of decedents; gather, verify, compile, and evaluate information and other data; evaluate and preserve evidence that would assist the Medical Examiner in providing an opinion concerning the cause and manner of death; provide effective and credible courtroom testimony; appropriately manage the emotional burden of repetitive exposure to death and human remains in various stages of decomposition, disease, and trauma; maintain the confidentiality and integrity of information; establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work; proficiently keyboard and use computer software applications including Microsoft Word, Outlook, Internet Explorer, and various search engines; and operate other related office equipment.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The work of the Investigator is performed both within an office and in the field and requires the incumbent to handle human remains on a regular basis. The work is physically demanding requiring lifting/pushing/pulling while simultaneously climbing up or down stairs or maneuvering difficult terrain to move bodies in excess of 100 pounds, in various degrees of decay, mutilation, infestation, and disease on a regular basis; and bending, reaching, stooping, climbing, crawling, and crouching while observing and cataloguing information at the death scene. The work requires the extrication of bodies from potentially complicated death scenes, in all types of terrain, under adverse conditions, and exposure to inclement weather conditions. Investigators are required to be available on a 24-hour rotating and scheduled-basis, call responsive within 15 minutes, and arrive at death scene without delay. The Investigator must be

able to drive safely at night and in inclement weather conditions. The work involves heightened risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and toxic chemicals, and infectious diseases. The work environment can be stressful and/or unpredictable and requires demonstrated emotional control and interpersonal skills when communicating with family members and witnesses who may be in the initial stages of grief, mentally ill, or under the influence of drugs or intoxicants. Investigators are expected to read and interpret information and draw logical conclusions. Manual dexterity is required both for the operation of office equipment and the equipment utilized to remove and transport bodies.

Office use: 12/22/2017  
Revised: 2/18/2020

