



CORONER SECTION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the Coroner's Office involved?

The Coroner is required by state law to investigate all deaths that fall under Coroner jurisdiction. Coroner jurisdiction ranges from deceased individuals who had no regular doctor to individuals who sustain some type of traumatic injury, such as falls, industrial deaths, traffic accidents, suicides, homicides, etc.

Where are the deceased taken?

When necessary, the deceased is transported to the Kern County Coroner's Office for a forensic exam or safekeeping, and later released to the family's authorized funeral home or cremation service.

Will I be able to see my family member or friend at the Coroner's Office?

No, the Coroner's Office does not allow public visitations. The deceased will be released to a funeral home for viewing.

What should I do if a deceased family member is at the Coroner's Office?

Contact the funeral home of your choice. They are prepared to assist you in making the decisions necessary during this difficult time. They work closely with the Coroner's Office to arrange the release of your loved one from our facility. They will also assist you in deciding how many certified copies of the death certificate you may need and will order them for you when they file their paperwork with the county.

Are autopsies performed on all deceased individuals?

No, not all deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office require an autopsy examination. Autopsies are performed only on those cases where it is required by law or where it is necessary to determine the cause of death.

Am I required to pay for a family member's autopsy?

No.

When can I schedule the funeral service?

The Coroner's Office will complete the examination as soon as possible. The selected funeral home will contact the Coroner to obtain a timeline about when the exam may be completed.

What if I have no money for funeral expenses?

If the decedent or legal next-of-kin are indigent, then the legal next-of-kin may apply for an indigent cremation. Applications may be obtained from the Coroner's Office during regular business hours.

Will we be able to find out the cause of death?

Yes, when the results become available. If cause of death is immediately known, the death certificate will indicate cause of death and will be provided on the death certificate at the time of the funeral arrangements.

If cause of death is not immediately known, the death certificate will be issued at the time of the funeral arrangements with "pending" as the cause of death. In these cases, the cause of death requires further studies such as microscopic and toxicological testing. When the results are returned and the doctor makes the final determination, usually in about 120 days, Coroner staff will notify the next-of-kin of the cause of death. Subsequently, Coroner staff will submit an amendment to the death certificate for the cause of death.

How do I obtain property taken by the Coroner's Office?

Generally, property is released with the deceased to the funeral home that is providing arrangements.

What are the Coroner Office business hours?

Our business hours are 8 am to 5 pm, Monday thru Friday. Our office is closed between 12 noon and 1pm for lunch.