

# **AUTOPSY ASSISTANT**

## **JOB PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

The Autopsy Assistant performs technical work in support of the Medical Examiner/forensic pathologist during autopsies and other postmortem examinations. Assistance to the Medical Examiner may involve opening and closing bodies and collecting toxicological samples during autopsies; taking x-rays and photographs of human remains; processing x-rays; transporting bodies; storage of samples; clean up and maintenance of the laboratory, supplies and evidence.

## **CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS**

This is a single level classification within the Medical Examiner's Office. The work supports the efforts of the Medical Examiner through assisting in autopsies and maintaining the cleanliness of the laboratory. The work is distinguished from the Medical Examiner Investigator class by the absence of field investigations of death scenes and preparation of death investigation reports.

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

- Responsible for receiving and releasing bodies and maintaining the proper chain of custody with regard to the human remains and to any clothing, personal effects, or jewelry that may accompany it. Insure proper handling of any paperwork associated with receiving or releasing of bodies.
- Prepares lab for autopsies including laying out supplies and instruments, transferring body to autopsy table, undressing and recording description of the body, flushing blood and body fluids from body.
- Prepares body for autopsy; weighs and measures human remains; may open bodies and under direction from the Medical Examiner may remove organs or tissues; sutures and cleans body upon completion of autopsy.
- Respond to calls outside of traditional work hours as necessary to transport bodies and assist in autopsies.
- Ensures proper handling, transfers, labeling and storing of specimens.
- Cleans and maintains work area and equipment using sanitation/decontamination, safety and biohazard control measures.
- Cleans the Medical Examiner's Office and laboratories including mopping, scouring toilets and sinks, vacuuming and emptying trash and appropriate disposal of biohazardous waste.
- Transports bodies from death scenes including hospitals, nursing homes and other locations involving driving a motor vehicle.

- Operates x-ray equipment; takes photographs of human remains; coordinates handling, storage and transfers of film and photographs and maintains related records.
- Monitors level of supplies, conducts inventories and orders supplies and materials as needed.
- Provides assistance to other Medical Examiner staff.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Education and Training:**

Six months experience handling bodies in a morgue, mortuary or similar setting; or course work in biology, preferably including physiology/anatomy; or any combination of education or experience which would demonstrate the ability to perform the work.

Requires a motor vehicle operator's license and evidence of a safe driving record.

**Knowledge of** . . . safety and biohazard control measures; use and operation of photographic and x-ray equipment; basic record keeping practices; cleaning and sanitizing practices.

**Ability to** . . . physically perform the essential functions of the job including lifting human remains; follow oral and written directions and protocols; deal with death and human remains in various stages of decomposition, disease, and trauma; handle the psychological effects of death; maintain the confidentiality and integrity of information; adhere to stringent sanitation and biohazard control measures; and communicate effectively orally and in writing.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT & PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The work of the Autopsy Assistant is predominantly performed within the Medical Examiner's laboratory and requires the incumbent to handle human remains on a regular basis. The work is physical requiring lifting and transporting of bodies, the manipulating of autopsy equipment such as saws, scissors, and sutures, and bending, reaching and pulling while assisting the Medical Examiner in conducting autopsies.

Regular exposure to chemicals and sanitation devices is expected.

The incumbent must be able to hear and respond to oral instructions; walk between the autopsy table and the storage room and office; stand for periods of time up to two or three hours; gather and lift human remains from ground or bed level; and operate a motor vehicle for the transportation of bodies.

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