



COBB COUNTY OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

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INFORMATION FOR NEXT-OF-KIN - MEDICAL EXAMINER PROCEDURES

To Family and Friends:

First let us express our sincere condolences for your loss. This information sheet is intended to answer many of the procedural questions you may have in the coming days. The mission of the Office of the Medical Examiner is to provide high-quality investigation into cause and manner of death and to assist family members with information regarding their loved one's death. Our office is dedicated to providing compassionate assistance during this trying time.

While we make a sincere effort to accommodate the requests of the decedent or the family, in certain circumstances, we may be unable to do so given the provisions of Georgia law, the needs of law enforcement, or public health implications involved in a case. Under Georgia law, the Medical Examiner is both required and empowered to determine the cause and manner of deaths falling under their jurisdiction.

PROCESS

Transportation

If necessary, the decedent will be transported to the Cobb County Medical Examiner's Office. Please be advised that this facility does not permit for viewings of the deceased.

Examination

An examination by a forensic pathologist will be conducted to determine the actual cause and manner of death. This examination normally occurs within two business days. The forensic pathologist will determine whether an autopsy and/or laboratory tests are required as part of the examination.

Release of Remains

The decedent will be available for release after completion of the examination and upon the receipt of a signed Authorization to Release form. The Release form must be signed by the legal next-of-kin authorized by law to direct disposition of remains. Your funeral home will provide this form for next-of-kin signature. Please note that we are unable to refer you to a specific funeral home.

Pending Cases

For some of our cases, we are unable to determine the cause and/or manner of death immediately following our examination. It is frequently necessary for us to perform additional investigation, which may include review of medical records, microscopic slides, and/or chemical or toxicological tests in order to determine the cause and/or manner of death. Depending on the specific analyses required, these determinations can require 3 months of further investigation. In the event such additional time is required, a death certificate will not be available until the results of the additional testing have been received by our office and the forensic pathologist has had a chance to review everything.

Our office can provide Proof of Death letters. This letter, printed on our letterhead and notarized as a legal document, may be accepted by numerous agencies to assist you with closing bank accounts, canceling services, and so forth. Please be aware that many insurance companies do not accept these letters as sufficient for purposes of payment of life insurance or other benefits. These Proof of Death letters are provided at no cost. If required, please contact our office to obtain these letters.

As soon as the cause and manner of death have been determined, our office will complete our portion of the death certificate. Your funeral home is responsible for completing the remainder of the death certificate and filing it with the Vital Records Office.

Personal Property

At the scene of the death, we take custody of certain personal property belonging to the decedent. We may release this personal property at the scene to the legal next-of-kin. If not, the property is removed from the scene along with the decedent. We will release the property to the funeral home for its further delivery to the next-of-kin.

OBTAINING DOCUMENTS

Death Certificate

Often the funeral home responsible for disposition of the decedent will offer the service of obtaining one or more certified death certificates as part of the cost of services. Otherwise, you may request certified copies of the death certificate from the Cobb County Public Health Vital Records Office online, in person, or by mail. For information on obtaining a death certificate please contact the Vital Records Office at 770-514-2337. Additional information can be found on their website: www.cobbanddouglasspublichealth.com

Medical Examiner's Report

Requests for a copy of the Medical Examiner's Report may be done at any time; however, the report will not be released until it is complete. Copies of the report will be available after the cause and manner of death are determined and the death certificate is filed. Requests for the Medical Examiner's Report must be received in writing. Please include the decedent's name, the date of death, your name, mailing address, phone number, and email address in your request. You can send your request via:

Email: The address given to you by your Investigator or medicalexaminer@cobbcounty.org

Mail: 150 N. Marietta Parkway, Marietta, GA 30060

Fax: 770-528-2207

Please call our office at 770-528-2200 or contact your Investigator directly if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Cobb County Medical Examiner's Office