



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

## A. Medicolegal Office Practices

### 1. Professional Membership

- |                                                                                                                     |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. One member of the medicolegal staff shall be a member in good standing with the IAC&ME. +                        | Yes | No |     |
| b. The Chief Medicolegal officer (Coroner or Medical Examiner) should be a member in good standing with the IAC&ME. | Yes | No | N/A |

### 2. Office Contact Information

- |                                                                                                                       |     |    |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The coroner/medical examiner office (C/ME) telephone number shall be published in the local/regional phone book. + | Yes | No |     |
| b. The C/ME contact information should be posted and labeled on the county website.                                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The office should have a "general" email address.                                                                  | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The primary C/ME staff members should have office email addresses.                                                 | Yes | No | N/A |

### 3. Office Space and Equipment

- |                                                                                                                          |     |    |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office should provide workspace for all administrative employees.                                                 | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. The office should provide workspace for all investigative employees.                                                  | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The office should provide workspace for all forensic employees.                                                       | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The office should provide workspace for all morgue employees.                                                         | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. The office should have access to gathering space for office functions (i.e., training, break rooms, restrooms, etc.). | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. The office should have workspace for meeting with families.                                                           | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |    |                                                                                                                  |     |    |     |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| g. | The office shall provide enough general storage space so that items are not stacked in hallways or open areas. † | Yes | No |     |
| h. | The office shall provide lockable storage space separate from public areas. †                                    | Yes | No |     |
| i. | Computers, fax/copy machines, and phones should be available to staff.                                           | Yes | No | N/A |
| j. | Administrative staff shall be provided enough equipment to handle the daily case load. †                         | Yes | No |     |
| k. | Investigative staff shall be provided enough equipment to handle the daily case load. †                          | Yes | No |     |
| l. | The office should have high-speed Internet access.                                                               | Yes | No | N/A |
| m. | The office shall have a written policy covering Internet use and password protection. †                          | Yes | No |     |

## 4. Office Space Security and Safety

- |    |                                                                                           |     |    |     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. | The facility shall have a security system in place. †                                     | Yes | No |     |
| b. | Access to the office shall be controlled and limited for both the staff and the public. † | Yes | No |     |
| c. | A building diagram should be posted with evacuation routes shown.                         | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. | Administrative and morgue areas shall be separated by sealed doors. †                     | Yes | No |     |
| e. | First aid kit should be mounted, visible and accessible to office staff.                  | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. | Work areas should be maintained in a safe and appropriate manner.                         | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                                     |                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| g. The office shall provide 24-hour locked storage for evidence and property. +                                     | Yes    No        |
| h. Case files shall be in a secured, lockable location. +                                                           | Yes    No        |
| i. Lighting in all work areas shall be appropriate. +                                                               | Yes    No        |
| j. A preventative maintenance program for the facility should be in place (e.g. HVAC, electrical and mechanical).   | Yes    No    N/A |
| k. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning system shall be appropriate for the size of the office and caseload. + | Yes    No        |
| l. The office should have a routine maintenance or cleaning schedule and contract (bonded agency).                  | Yes    No    N/A |

## 5. Office Policy and Procedures

- |                                                                                                                                          |                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| a. The office shall have a policy/procedure manual that contains appropriate standards of internal operating procedures or guidelines. + | Yes    No        |
| b. The office shall have a policy/procedure manual accessible to staff members. +                                                        | Yes    No        |
| c. The office policy/procedure manual shall include currently applicable C/ME statutes. +                                                | Yes    No        |
| d. The office should make available the County/Office Human Resources guidelines.                                                        | Yes    No    N/A |
| e. The office shall have written policy for reporting probable contagious diseases to Public Health Agencies. +                          | Yes    No        |
| f. The office shall have written policy for handling religious/ cultural sensitivity and autopsy objections. +                           | Yes    No        |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- g. The office shall have written policy regarding media contact. + Yes    No
  
- h. The office shall have an established policy/ procedure describing which cases receive partial autopsies. + Yes    No
  
- i. The office shall have an established policy/ procedure describing which cases receive complete autopsies. + Yes    No

## **6. Records, Property Storage, Release and Retrieval Policies and Procedures**

- a. The office shall have written policy covering record storage, maintenance, retrieval, and security. + Yes    No
  
- b. Record storage space shall be secure, with controlled access. + Yes    No
  
- c. The office should maintain retrievable records for data analysis for a minimum (5) years. Yes    No    N/A
  
- d. The office shall have written policy describing property/ evidence collection, inventory, and disposition. + Yes    No
  
- e. The office shall have written documentation created and maintained on all deaths reported to the office. + Yes    No
  
- f. Verify that the office creates and maintains records on all investigations that occur within the jurisdiction. + Yes    No
  
- g. All case reports should describe how case jurisdiction (acceptance or declining of a case) was determined. Yes    No    N/A
  
- h. The office shall maintain a case numbering system that tracks case reports, receiving, examination and release of the body. + Yes    No
  
- i. The office shall maintain enough storage space to store 5 years worth of records in the office. + Yes    No



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                                            |     |    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| j. The office shall have written policy regarding case tracking, caseloads and completion times (including all reports). + | Yes | No |     |
| k. The office shall have written policy regarding chain of custody. +                                                      | Yes | No |     |
| l. The office shall have written policy regarding confidentiality. +                                                       | Yes | No |     |
| m. The office shall have written policy regarding release of information. +                                                | Yes | No |     |
| n. The office shall have written policy regarding release of photographs. +                                                | Yes | No |     |
| o. The office shall have written policy regarding release of documents. +                                                  | Yes | No |     |
| p. The office shall have written policy regarding prescription drug handling, secured storage, and disposition. +          | Yes | No |     |
| q. The office shall have written policy regarding illicit drug handling, secured storage, and disposition. +               | Yes | No |     |
| r. The office shall have written policy regarding the handling, secured storage, and disposition of money. +               | Yes | No |     |
| s. The office should have a written policy regarding the collection and storage of specimens for DNA analysis.             | Yes | No | N/A |

## 7. Annual Reporting

- |                                                                                                                   |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall prepare an annual report with both descriptive and statistical data. +                        | Yes | No |     |
| b. The annual report should contain a narrative description of jurisdiction served, population and C/ME statutes. | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The annual report should contain a narrative description of office goals and objectives.                       | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

- |                                                                                                                 |     |    |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| d. The annual report should contain the number of death reported to the office.                                 | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. The annual report should contain the number of cases accepted by the office.                                 | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. The annual report should contain the number of cases by manners of death.                                    | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. The annual report should contain the number of cases by "general" cause of death (within each MOD category). | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. The annual report should contain the number of cases receiving scene investigation by C/ME investigator.     | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The annual report should contain the number of bodies transported by the office.                             | Yes | No | N/A |
| j. The annual report should contain the number of bodies transported to the office.                             | Yes | No | N/A |
| k. The annual report should contain the number of external examinations performed.                              | Yes | No | N/A |
| l. The annual report should contain the number of partial autopsies performed.                                  | Yes | No | N/A |
| m. The annual report should contain the number of full autopsies performed.                                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| n. The annual report should contain the number of hospital autopsies under C/ME jurisdiction.                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| o. The annual report should contain the number of cases where toxicology was performed.                         | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- 
- |                                                                                                                                              |     |    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| p. The annual report should contain the number of unidentified bodies.                                                                       | Yes | No | N/A |
| q. The annual report should contain the number of organ and tissue referrals and donations made to the organ procurement organization (OPO). | Yes | No | N/A |
| r. The annual report should contain the number of unclaimed bodies.                                                                          | Yes | No | N/A |
| s. The annual report should contain the number of exhumations by the C/ME.                                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| t. The annual report should contain data table of categories of cause and manner of death.                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| u. The annual report should be available to the public (i.e., published on the state/county website).                                        | Yes | No | N/A |

## 8. Quality Assurance Policies

- |                                                                                                                                                             |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office should have written policy regarding office performance improvement.                                                                          | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. The office should have written policy regarding office quality assurance.                                                                                | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The office should have written policy regarding case reviews.                                                                                            | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The office should have written policy regarding report reviews (investigative and autopsy).                                                              | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. The office shall have a standard method/system to keep track case status (e.g., complete/incomplete cases).+                                             | Yes | No |     |
| f. The office should have a targeted time-line for case report completion                                                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. The office should participate in national/state data collection efforts (e.g., violent death reporting, child fatality review, in custody deaths, etc.). | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |    |                                                                                                        |     |    |     |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| h. | The office shall contact OSHA or Consumer Product Safety when appropriate cases arise. +               | Yes | No |     |
| i. | The agency's policy/procedure manual shall require criminal background checks for all new employees. + | Yes | No |     |
| j. | The office should have written policy for reviewing unidentified cases.                                | Yes | No | N/A |
| k. | The office shall have written policy for determining case jurisdiction. +                              | Yes | No |     |
| l. | The office shall enter unidentified decedents into NamUs. +                                            | Yes | No |     |
| m. | The office should work with law enforcement to report unidentified decedent data for NCIC.             | Yes | No | N/A |
| n. | The office shall have written policy regarding notifying NOK. +                                        | Yes | No |     |
| o. | The office shall have written policy regarding decedent identification methods. +                      | Yes | No |     |
| p. | The office should participate in local or state level child fatality review teams.                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| q. | The office should participate in local or state level elder death review teams.                        | Yes | No | N/A |
| r. | The office should participate in local or state level domestic fatality review teams.                  | Yes | No | N/A |
| s. | The office shall complete death certificates consistent with CDC guidelines. +                         | Yes | No |     |

## 9. Public Service

- |    |                                                                                               |     |    |     |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. | The office should perform public education when requested by schools, clubs, hospitals, etc.. | Yes | No | N/A |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|





# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

b. The office should participate in education programs for law enforcement, EMS and fire agencies. Yes No N/A

c. The office should have a website or webpage. Yes No N/A

## 10. Organ and Tissue Donation

a. The office shall have written policy regarding organ and tissue procurement. + Yes No

b. The office should cooperate with organ and tissue procurement organizations. Yes No N/A

c. The office should keep statistics on organ and tissue donation cases. Yes No N/A

## 11. Mass Fatality Planning

a. The office shall implement a comprehensive disaster preparedness/mass fatality plan that is reviewed annually. + Yes No

b. The office should have an MOU or Interagency Agreements for the access of needed equipment in the event of a mass fatality. Yes No N/A

c. The chief/lead investigator shall be certified in the minimum Incident Command System courses offered by FEMA. + Yes No

d. The office should participate in mass disaster drills, table top exercises and functional drills annually. Yes No N/A

e. The office should coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions regarding mass fatality planning. Yes No N/A

f. Contact information should be readily available for pertinent officials and offices in case of a mass fatality incident. Yes No N/A



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                                   |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| g. The office mass fatality plan should address the collection of data for missing persons reports (call center). | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. The office should have a mass fatality case management process (e.g. manual or electronic).                    | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The jurisdiction should have a protocol for a family assistance center which includes the C/ME office.         | Yes | No | N/A |

## 12. Employee Safety and Training

- |                                                                                                                                                    |     |    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall have written policy to ensure compliance with government safety standards.+                                                    | Yes | No |     |
| b. The office shall have written policy regarding exposure to biohazards.+                                                                         | Yes | No |     |
| c. The office shall document employee training.+                                                                                                   | Yes | No |     |
| d. The county/office shall conduct new employee orientation training.+                                                                             | Yes | No |     |
| e. The office should have an employee training program.                                                                                            | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. The office should keep records of required staff vaccinations (e.g., Hepatitis B vaccinations accepted or refused).                             | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. The office shall have a documented "field training" program for new investigators.+                                                             | Yes | No |     |
| h. The "chief/lead investigator" shall be registered by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) or its equivalent.+          | Yes | No |     |
| i. The majority of the C/ME investigators should be registered by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) or its equivalent. | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

---

- j. The office shall require investigative staff to receive formal continuing education (CE).+                      Yes    No



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

## B. Investigative Practices

### 1. Investigations

- |                                                                                                                                                            |     |    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall have written policy covering case notification, acceptance of, and declining of cases.+                                                | Yes | No |     |
| b. The office shall have established scene investigation policies/procedures.+                                                                             | Yes | No |     |
| c. An investigator should be available 24hrs a day to respond to calls for service and scene investigation.                                                | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. A staff member shall be available 24hrs a day to field calls for investigative services.+                                                               | Yes | No |     |
| e. The office shall have an established policy regarding infant death investigations (birth to 1 year - SUIDI Form).+                                      | Yes | No |     |
| f. The office should have an established policy regarding death investigations of children.                                                                | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. The office should have an established policy regarding the communication with NOK in cases of sudden unexplained pediatric deaths.                      | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. The office should have written policy regarding personal communication of final certification findings in cases of sudden unexplained pediatric deaths. | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The office should have written policy regarding memorial keepsakes in sudden unexplained pediatric deaths.                                              | Yes | No | N/A |
| j. The office should have written policy regarding NOK interaction (holding, touching, etc) in cases of non suspicious pediatric deaths.                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| k. Doll re-enactments should be performed on all sudden unexplained infant deaths (when possible).                                                         | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                 |     |    |     |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| l. | Run sheets from emergency medical technicians, ED records, and hospital charts shall be available to the investigator. +                                        | Yes | No |     |
| m. | The office shall have written policy regarding formal pronouncement or field declaration of death. +                                                            | Yes | No |     |
| n. | The office shall have written policy regarding the transfer of case information across shifts or supervisors. +                                                 | Yes | No |     |
| o. | Paper bags shall be used to secured hands on suspected homicide cases and suspicious deaths when indicated. +                                                   | Yes | No |     |
| p. | Body bags should be secured and/or sealed on all jurisdictional deaths by the scene investigator (as appropriate).                                              | Yes | No | N/A |
| q. | The office shall have a written policy regarding communication of investigative findings with law enforcement agencies. +                                       | Yes | No |     |
| r. | Postmortem observations shall be performed and documented by the scene investigator. +                                                                          | Yes | No |     |
| s. | The office shall have written policy regarding the documentation, collection, transport, storage and disposition of money from the scene. +                     | Yes | No |     |
| t. | The office shall have written policy regarding the documentation, collection, transport, storage and disposition of prescriptions medications from the scene. + | Yes | No |     |
| u. | The office shall have written policy regarding the documentation, collection, transport, storage and disposition of illicit drugs from the scene. +             | Yes | No |     |

## 2. Identification

- |    |                                                                            |     |    |  |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--|
| a. | The office shall have written policy covering identification procedures. + | Yes | No |  |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--|



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- 
- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| b. The office shall have written policy regarding the use of fingerprints, DNA, radiological or dental documentation to establish positive identification. +                                                                                                                                        | Yes | No |
| c. The office shall have written policy regarding family members or friends to make positive visual identification. +                                                                                                                                                                               | Yes | No |
| d. The office shall have a case body numbering system in place for labeling all bodies. +                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Yes | No |
| e. The "method" of decedent identification shall be recorded. +                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes | No |
| f. The office shall require a signed statement of identification by the individual performing the identification. +                                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes | No |
| g. The source of identification (i.e., government identification, license, etc.) shall be recorded and retained in case file. +                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes | No |
| h. The office shall have written policy describing case types where fingerprints, dental exams, body x-rays, anthropology, or DNA analysis experts should be used. +                                                                                                                                | Yes | No |
| i. The office shall have access to conduct fingerprint comparison. +                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Yes | No |
| j. The office shall have access to conduct dental examination. +                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Yes | No |
| k. The office shall have access to conduct body x-rays. +                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Yes | No |
| l. The office shall have access to forensic anthropology. +                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Yes | No |
| m. The office shall have access to forensic serology and DNA analysis. +                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Yes | No |
| n. Prior to disposition of unidentified bodies, the office shall perform the following tasks in order to permit potential future identification: fingerprint the body; photograph the body; examine and chart the dentition; take x-rays; store specimens for DNA and enters the data into NamUs. + | Yes | No |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                           |     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| o. The office shall establish scientific identification on all homicides (if possible). † | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|

### 3. Written Documentation

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |     |    |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall complete a comprehensive written investigative report on all jurisdictional cases. †                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Yes | No |     |
| b. A written report will be generated on all reportable cases (i.e., hospice deaths, nursing homes deaths). †                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes | No |     |
| c. The office shall have a written policy requiring investigators to document initial history of the fatal event, the essential facts and circumstances of the case, decedent "histories" (when appropriate), and make a record of any witness accounts. †                                                                     | Yes | No |     |
| d. The office shall have a written policy requiring significant circumstantial and physical observations be noted and recorded regarding the time of death, (including the presence, location and degree of rigor; the location, fixation, and color of postmortem livor; and, when indicated, the temperature of the body). † | Yes | No |     |
| e. The investigative scene reports should be available to the Forensic Pathologist before autopsy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. Cause and manner of death should be recorded in the autopsy and/or investigative report consistent with what is stated on the death certificate.                                                                                                                                                                            | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. Copies of the death certificate should be included in the case file and retrievable (digital or paper).                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. Medical records should be obtained on all jurisdictional cases (when necessary).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The office should have written policy regarding written record retention.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                                           |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| j. The office should routinely obtain copies of first responders reports (e.g., EMS, Fire, Police, witnesses).            | Yes | No | N/A |
| k. The office shall conduct an independent investigation separate from Law Enforcement or other investigative entities. † | Yes | No |     |
| l. Investigative reports shall include 911 call time, office contact time, and scene arrival/departure times. †           | Yes | No |     |
| m. The office shall document the notification of next of kin (who, where, when). †                                        | Yes | No |     |

## 4. Photographic Documentation

- |                                                                                                                                                                      |     |    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall have written policy regarding the use, security, and storage of case photographs. †                                                              | Yes | No |     |
| b. Photographic media shall be secured and retrievable by case number. †                                                                                             | Yes | No |     |
| c. Investigative scene photographs should be available to the Forensic Pathologist before autopsy.                                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The office shall have written policy requiring investigators to obtain scene photographs. †                                                                       | Yes | No |     |
| e. Close-up (identification) photographs shall be taken of all decedents. †                                                                                          | Yes | No |     |
| f. Intermediate (orientation) photographs shall be taken at all scenes (e.g., to establish body condition/clothing and position in relation to the overall scene). † | Yes | No |     |
| g. Distant photographs shall be taken at all scenes (e.g., to document the environment). †                                                                           | Yes | No |     |
| h. The office shall take photographs with and without scales in those cases when no frame of reference is present. †                                                 | Yes | No |     |





# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

- i. The office shall have written policy regarding digital media storage and back-up schedule (off site storage). +      Yes    No
  
- j. The office should have written policy regarding photograph retention.      Yes    No    N/A



## **C. Morgue Facilities**

### **1. Body Handling and Transport**

- |                                                                                                                                       |     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| a. The office shall have written policy for identifying decedents/remains for transport.+                                             | Yes | No |
| b. The office shall have written policy regarding the release of personal effects from the body at the scene.+                        | Yes | No |
| c. The office shall have written policy regarding body handling safety including biohazard precautions.+                              | Yes | No |
| d. Bodies/bags shall be appropriately tagged and secured prior to transport (for chain of custody).+                                  | Yes | No |
| e. Body bags will be utilized in all cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the office.+                                           | Yes | No |
| f. Body transport vehicles shall be clean and properly maintained (regardless of who owns them).+                                     | Yes | No |
| g. Body transport stretchers shall be in good working condition and cleaned on a regular basis (regardless of who owns them).+        | Yes | No |
| h. Removal of a body (from scene and vehicles) shall be handled in a dignified manner.+                                               | Yes | No |
| i. The investigator shall control the body (at the scene) until removal in all cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the office.+ | Yes | No |

### **2. Body Receiving Area**

- |                                                                                           |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall have written policy regarding the receiving and releasing of bodies.+ | Yes | No |     |
| b. The body receiving and handling area should be protected from public view.             | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                 |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| c. The body receiving area shall be of adequate size to accommodate the caseload. +             | Yes | No |     |
| d. All surface areas, floors and walls in the body receiving area shall be clean. +             | Yes | No |     |
| e. Body scales should be available and operate.                                                 | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. Body scale should be calibrated and maintained consistent with manufacturers specifications. | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. Body stretchers and carts shall be maintained and in good working condition. +               | Yes | No |     |
| h. The body receiving area shall be secured. +                                                  | Yes | No |     |

### 3. Refrigeration

- |                                                                                            |     |    |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The refrigerated storage shall be accessible to the autopsy and body receiving areas. + | Yes | No |     |
| b. The refrigerated storage space shall be sufficient to maintain a normal caseload. +     | Yes | No |     |
| c. Temperature gauges shall be operable and checked regularly by staff. +                  | Yes | No |     |
| d. Temperatures should be recorded/logged on a schedule by C/ME staff.                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. Separate refrigerated storage should be available for decomposed bodies.                | Yes | No | N/A |

### 4. Autopsy Facility

- |                                                                                   |     |    |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--|
| a. The office shall have written morgue policies available in the autopsy area. + | Yes | No |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--|



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- 
- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| b. The autopsy facility should be accredited by a recognized accrediting agency (i.e., IAC&ME, JACO, NAME).                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. Staff changing areas should be provided with showers for both male and female employees.                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. Areas used for dissection (autopsy tables, body carts, etc.) shall be maintained and in good operating condition.+                                                                                                                                                           | Yes | No |     |
| e. Organ scales, scientific equipment, suction and other pieces of equipment shall be calibrated and maintained.+                                                                                                                                                               | Yes | No |     |
| f. First aid kits, safety showers and eyewashes shall be available and in good working order.+                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes | No |     |
| g. Ventilation system(s) shall adequately control odors.+                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Yes | No |     |
| h. Appropriate personal protective devices including face protection, chest and arm protection, gloves, shoe covers, and N95 respirators and/or PAPRS shall be available to staff.+                                                                                             | Yes | No |     |
| i. The autopsy area shall be clean, with adequate lighting, cooling and heating.+                                                                                                                                                                                               | Yes | No |     |
| j. The autopsy surfaces shall be routinely cleaned and sanitized.+                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Yes | No |     |
| k. Adequate space and equipment for tissue cutting and histology preparation shall be available.+                                                                                                                                                                               | Yes | No |     |
| l. A space shall be designated for tissue storage and a method utilized to control odors.+                                                                                                                                                                                      | Yes | No |     |
| m. The autopsy area shall be able to accommodate normal and peak case load, including the typical number of autopsies or external examinations; the standard complement of autopsy and laboratory personnel; and official participants or observers from cooperating agencies.+ | Yes | No |     |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                    |     |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| n. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) sheets shall be posted in areas where chemicals are stored.+ | Yes | No |
| o. Safety showers, eye washes and first aid kits shall be located in the autopsy area.+            | Yes | No |
| p. A building diagram shall be posted with evacuation routes clearly noted.+                       | Yes | No |
| q. All biological samples shall be stored in an appropriate well ventilated safe location.+        | Yes | No |

## 5. Forensic Autopsy Procedures

- |                                                                                                                                                                                 |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall have written policy covering postmortem examination procedures.+                                                                                            | Yes | No |     |
| b. The office shall have written policy specifying the criteria for determination of when complete autopsies, partial autopsies, or external examinations are to be performed.+ | Yes | No |     |
| c. The office should have written policy covering evidence collection.                                                                                                          | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The office should have written policy covering tissue and body fluid specimen collection.                                                                                    | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. The office should have written policy covering evidence and specimen disposition and destruction.                                                                            | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. The circumstances of death shall be reviewed prior to autopsy (if known).+                                                                                                   | Yes | No |     |
| g. Fingerprints or DNA cards should be taken on all cases (if possible).                                                                                                        | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. Fingerprints, dental examinations, body x-rays, forensic anthropology or forensic serology and DNA analysis shall be performed on all unidentified cases (if possible).+     | Yes | No |     |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

- |                                                                                                                                                                        |     |    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| i. Body x-rays should be taken on all cases (if possible).                                                                                                             | Yes | No | N/A |
| j. Dental examinations, forensic anthropology or forensic serology and DNA analysis should be performed on all cases (if appropriate).                                 | Yes | No | N/A |
| k. All collected specimens shall be labeled and logged with the case number, name, date and time of collection. †                                                      | Yes | No |     |
| l. The office shall have written policy regarding chain of custody utilized in the capturing of all biological specimens. †                                            | Yes | No |     |
| m. Autopsy photographs shall be taken to record the examination. †                                                                                                     | Yes | No |     |
| n. Identification (close-up) photographs shall be taken, labeled and saved for all cases. †                                                                            | Yes | No |     |
| o. Autopsies shall be performed in greater than 95% of suspected homicides at the time of death. †                                                                     | Yes | No |     |
| p. Autopsies shall be performed in greater than 95% of all cases in which the manner of death is undetermined at the time an autopsy decision is made. †               | Yes | No |     |
| q. A forensic pathologist shall personally examines all external aspects of the body before dissection. †                                                              | Yes | No |     |
| r. A forensic pathologist should be responsible to perform each postmortem examination, the diagnoses made, the opinions formed, and any subsequent opinion testimony. | Yes | No | N/A |
| s. All autopsy ex-situ dissections should be personally performed by a forensic pathologist.                                                                           | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |     |    |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| t. All pathology assistants, autopsy technicians, dieners, or others without medical training, shall work in the physical presence of and under the direct supervision of a forensic pathologist. †                                     | Yes | No |     |
| u. Specimens should be routinely retained for toxicological and histological examination during autopsies.                                                                                                                              | Yes | No | N/A |
| v. The office shall have written policy covering the retention and disposition of organ and tissue specimens taken at autopsy, that addresses whether, or under what circumstances, next-of-kin are to be notified of each retention. † | Yes | No |     |
| w. Samples should be routinely obtained for potential DNA analysis.                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| x. Autopsy tissue and fluid specimens should be individually collected; adequately packaged; properly labeled; appropriately preserved; and archived using a consistent and logical specimen numbering system.                          | Yes | No | N/A |
| y. Specimen containers should be labeled with the case number and the date collected; the type of contents; the name of the deceased; the name of the responsible physician; and the name of the person securing the specimen.          | Yes | No | N/A |
| z. Specimens collected for microbiological evaluation should be placed into appropriate transport media or sterile containers.                                                                                                          | Yes | No | N/A |
| aa. Microbiologic specimens should be promptly transported to the service laboratory.                                                                                                                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |

## **6. Forensic Autopsy Procedures (suspected sexual assault)**

- |                                                                                                                                                                  |     |    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. Sexual assault kits shall be available and specimens collected when necessary. †                                                                              | Yes | No |     |
| b. Control hair samples should be collected from the decedent by plucking a representative number of hairs from various body areas, e.g., scalp and pubic areas. | Yes | No | N/A |



## International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |    |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| c. In cases of suspected sexual contact that the pubic area should be lightly combed to obtain loose and foreign hairs, and are native control hairs plucked and packaged separately.               | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. In cases of suspected sexual contact swabbing of body orifices should be obtained and examined for the presence of spermatozoa, the presence of seminal fluid, and DNA and/or serologic markers. | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. In cases of suspected sexual contact bite marks should be processed according to procedures consistent with forensic Odontology practice (ABFO).                                                 | Yes | No | N/A |





# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

## D. Laboratory Services

### 1. Radiologic Services

- |                                                                                                                               |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office shall have access to radiographic equipment. +                                                                  | Yes | No |     |
| b. The radiographic equipment should be in a convenient location near the autopsy room.                                       | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The radiographic equipment shall be shielded in accordance with radiation safety standards. +                              | Yes | No |     |
| d. The radiographic equipment and x-ray viewing devices shall be available to the Forensic Pathologist. +                     | Yes | No |     |
| e. Radiographic equipment shall be operational and personnel properly trained to operate it. +                                | Yes | No |     |
| f. Exposure tags (dosimeters) shall be mandatory for all personnel working in the immediate area of radiographic equipment. + | Yes | No |     |

### 2. Toxicology Laboratory Services

- |                                                                                                         |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The C/ME office shall have access to a forensic toxicology laboratory. +                             | Yes | No |     |
| b. The toxicology laboratory shall be accredited by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT). + | Yes | No |     |
| c. A toxicology laboratory report shall be issued for each case that receives analysis. +               | Yes | No |     |
| d. The office shall have written policy regarding the collection and storage of toxicology specimens. + | Yes | No |     |
| e. The histology services should be performed by a certified laboratory.                                | Yes | No | N/A |
| f. The office shall have written policy describing criteria for toxicology orders. +                    | Yes | No |     |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

- |                                                                                                   |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| g. The office should maintain statistics regarding toxicology turnaround times.                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| h. 90% of all toxicology examinations are completed within 90 calendar days of case submission. + | Yes | No |     |
| i. 90% of all toxicology examinations are completed within 60 calendar days of case submission.   | Yes | No | N/A |

### 3. Crime Laboratory Services

- |                                                                                                                                                 |     |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office should have written policy covering the crime laboratory's roles and responsibilities.                                            | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. Laboratory services should be available to perform fingerprinting; serologic and/or DNA testing; ballistics; and trace evidence examination. | Yes | No | N/A |
| c. The crime laboratory shall be accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB). + | Yes | No |     |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

## E. Forensic Specialists

### 1. Forensic Pathologists

- |                                                                                                                                                                                               |     |    |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The forensic autopsies shall be performed by board-certified forensic pathologists (ABP). +                                                                                                | Yes | No |     |
| b. The forensic pathologist(s) shall be licensed to practice medicine in the state in which they practice. +                                                                                  | Yes | No |     |
| c. The licensure of the forensic pathologist(s) shall be verified annually. +                                                                                                                 | Yes | No |     |
| d. An autopsy report shall be prepared on each case autopsied. +                                                                                                                              | Yes | No |     |
| e. 90% of all autopsy reports are completed within 90 calendar days of autopsy performance. +                                                                                                 | Yes | No |     |
| f. 90% of all autopsy reports are completed within 60 calendar days of autopsy performance.                                                                                                   | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. Medical staff shall be of sufficient size so that no forensic pathologist is required to perform more than 325 autopsies/year (total by pathologist, inside AND outside cases included). + | Yes | No |     |
| h. Medical staff should be of sufficient size so that no forensic pathologist is required to perform more than 250 autopsies/year (total by pathologist, inside AND outside cases included).  | Yes | No | N/A |
| i. The office should have written policy regarding contracting with additional forensic pathologists (as needed).                                                                             | Yes | No | N/A |

### 2. Other Forensic Specialists

- |                                                                                                          |     |    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| a. The office should have written policy covering forensic specialist support services.                  | Yes | No | N/A |
| b. The office should have written policy describing cases which require contacting forensic specialists. | Yes | No | N/A |



# International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

*Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medical-legal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

---

- |                                                                                                                              |     |    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| c. The office should be affiliated with a board certified forensic odontologist (ABFO).                                      | Yes | No | N/A |
| d. The office should be affiliated with a board certified forensic anthropologist (ABFA).                                    | Yes | No | N/A |
| e. The office shall have access to other forensic specialists (i.e., botany, radiology, neuropathology, entomology, etc.). + | Yes | No |     |
| f. Forensic specialists should be certified by an accredited agency/association (i.e., FSAB accredited).                     | Yes | No | N/A |
| g. Forensic specialists shall be required to submit a written report. +                                                      | Yes | No |     |