

COUNTY OF SOLANO  
CORONER FORENSIC TECHNICIAN (ENTRY)

Est. 5/91

DEFINITION

Under immediate supervision, learns how to assist the pathologist in performing autopsies; prepares bodies of deceased persons for autopsy, examination and final disposition; performs other duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is the entry level class in the Coroner Forensic Technician series. Incumbents learn to carry out established procedures in handling, transportation and preparing deceased persons for post-mortem examination. This class is distinguished from Coroner Forensic Technician in that the latter is the full journey level.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Duties may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Learns to remove and transport bodies including decomposed bodies and associated personal property to the morgue and insures their custodial security. Documents the identity of bodies on arrival and departure from the central morgue; identifies, inventories and stores property of deceased. Weighs, measures and externally examines the body; undresses, collects, inventories and packs clothing and personal property for proper storage; assists in the recognition and protection of all evidence that may be found on the deceased.
2. Learns to remove a body from morgue refrigerator, verify, identify and cleans the deceased's facial features for viewing of the deceased by family members for purposes of identification.
3. Prepares body for post-mortem examination and pathological study by setting up necessary equipment, instruments and solutions; prepares the deceased for forensic autopsy. Learns to take X-rays of the deceased; presents pertinent charts and medical histories for the pathologist review.
4. Learns to keep a log on morgue activities; writes receipts for bodies, clothing, and personal property; fingerprints bodies in accordance with departmental standards; keeps records and performs clerical tasks as assigned.
5. Learns to open the cranium, thoracic and abdominal cavities using tools such as scalpel and hand operated electric powered base cutters. Excises and dissects organs and specimens such as liver, bile and stomach contents [using instruments such as scissors and knives]; obtains and labels blood samples and other body fluids for toxicological examination.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (Continued)

6. Records weight of organs and body fluids; prepares specimens for cultures; labels and files pathologic specimens; prepares and labels surgical specimens for examination; insures proper storage of surgical pathological specimens. Sutures and cleans bodies after autopsies; returns bodies to morgue refrigerator; prepares bodies for release to mortician after post-mortem examination.

7. Learns to assist the pathologist in examining physical evidence such as bullets, power burns, knives, pills and other foreign objects; records physical evidence. Photographs human bodies, specimens and organs on prescribed cases. Performs limited toxicology screens on specimens obtained from the autopsy; relinquishes retrieved missiles to the investigating officers in homicide cases; secures supplies; sterilizes and replaces surgical instruments used in autopsies.

8. Learns to maintain autopsy room in clean and orderly manner; sterilizes instruments and equipment; checks for adequate ventilation and condition of equipment; delivers soiled linen to laundry; returns cleaned linen to morgue and store room; maintains safety procedures and decorum of facility, and do other related sanitation work as required.

9. Learns how to operate removal van used in picking up bodies from hospitals, nursing homes, highways, residences, levies, rivers and bays, mountain slopes, and other places where a dead body might be found. Maintains van inventory including stretchers, straps, sheets and other necessary supplies. May be required to fly in aircraft, use boats, operate vehicles, or travel in heavy equipment to conduct a removal with the Coroner Investigator.

QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE

Any combination of education, training or experience which demonstrates possession of and competency in requisite abilities.

Typical qualifying experience would be: Hospital Morgue Attendant, Embalmer, Diener, Janitor with experience in sanitizing techniques, Hospital Corpsman, Emergency Medical Technician, former Deputy Coroner, Autopsy Assistant, Coroner Aide; one year of medical school training may be substituted for experience.

KNOWLEDGE/ABILITIES

Working knowledge of office practices, office equipment, mortuary science and funeral practices, including aseptic and antiseptic procedures. Knowledge of rules of evidence and of procedures to protect evidence and personal property, and general knowledge of anatomy.

KNOWLEDGE/ABILITIES (Continued)

Ability to understand and explain laws, regulations and policies governing the operation of the Coroner's Office; handle remains of deceased persons, including opening and closing the body; assist the pathologist during any autopsy; work effectively under unpleasant conditions; deal effectively with distraught persons; use post-mortem techniques and procedures; communicate effectively with people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and temperaments who are under extreme duress and grieving; establish and maintain cooperative working relationships; determine the appropriate course of action in emergency or stressful situations; maintain accurate records and document actions taken; follow written and oral instructions.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of or ability to obtain a valid Class C California Driver's license is required.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Independent travel will be required.

Incumbents must be able to work in a morgue/autopsy/funeral environment which will include meeting distraught families; must be able to lift objects weighing more than 100 pounds; work may also include working outdoors in all types of weather and terrain; and may include exposure to communicable disease.

Incumbents must also be willing to work shifts, variable hours, standby and overtime and are subject to be called out at night, on weekends and holidays.

Incumbents of this class should demonstrate necessary knowledge and abilities to be promoted to Coroner's Forensic Technician within twelve (12) months of appointment.

May testify in court proceedings.