

AGREEMENT FOR MEDICAL EXAMINER SERVICES

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into between Spokane County, a political subdivision of the State of Washington (“SPOKANE COUNTY”) and Kootenai County, a political subdivision of the State of Idaho (“KOOTENAI COUNTY”) (each individually “PARTY” and collectively “PARTIES”).

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.32.120(6), the Board of County Commissioners of Spokane County has the care of county property and the management of county funds and business; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.24.190, the Spokane County Medical Examiner performs the statutory duties of coroner in Spokane County; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Duke Johnson is the elected Coroner for Kootenai County; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 39.34 RCW and Idaho Code §§ 67-2328 and 67-2329, any two or more public agencies may enter into agreements with one another for joint or cooperative action; and

WHEREAS, the PARTIES desire to enter into an agreement for the provision of medical examiner services.

NOW THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual promises set forth hereinafter, the PARTIES do mutually agree as follows:

SECTION NO. 1: PURPOSE; SCOPE OF SERVICES

SPOKANE COUNTY, through the Spokane County Medical Examiner’s Office, shall provide to KOOTENAI COUNTY services as described in Attachment A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

SPOKANE COUNTY shall not provide any medical examiner services for KOOTENAI COUNTY for mass fatality events.

SPOKANE COUNTY may decline a request for services from KOOTENAI COUNTY for any lawful reason, including but not limited to SPOKANE COUNTY'S personnel or facility capacity, as determined by SPOKANE COUNTY in its sole discretion.

KOOTENAI COUNTY shall comply with the obligations, policies, and procedures set forth in Attachment A.

SECTION NO. 2: DURATION

The term of this Agreement will be from January 1, 2026 through January 31, 2026.

SECTION NO. 3: PAYMENT

KOOTENAI COUNTY shall pay SPOKANE COUNTY the fees for services provided as set out in Attachment B and Attachment C, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

SPOKANE COUNTY shall bill KOOTENAI COUNTY for services provided. KOOTENAI COUNTY shall pay SPOKANE COUNTY within 30 days of receipt of the invoice for services provided.

SECTION NO. 4: TERMINATION

KOOTENAI COUNTY shall pay for all services provided to the date of termination. Upon termination, any property, equipment, supplies, or materials used under this Agreement in the possession of Spokane County will be exclusively owned by Spokane County.

SECTION NO. 5: RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTIES

The PARTIES intend that an independent contractor relationship be created by this Agreement. No agent, employee, servant, or representative of any party shall be deemed to be an employee, agent, servant, or representative of the other party for any purpose. SPOKANE

COUNTY has the authority and discretion to control and direct the performance and details of its services provided pursuant to this Agreement, KOOTENAI COUNTY being interested only in the results obtained.

SECTION NO. 6: WAIVER

No officer, employee, agent or otherwise of SPOKANE COUNTY has the power, right or authority to waive any of the conditions or provisions to this Agreement. No waiver of any breach of this Agreement shall be held to be a waiver of any other or subsequent breach. All remedies afforded in this Agreement or at law shall be taken and construed as cumulative, that is, in addition to every other remedy provided herein or by law. Failure of SPOKANE COUNTY to enforce at any time any of the provisions of this Agreement or to require at any time performance by KOOTENAI COUNTY of any provision hereof, shall in no way be construed to be a waiver of such provisions, nor in any way affect the validity of this Agreement or any part hereof, or the right of SPOKANE COUNTY to hereafter enforce each and every such provision.

SECTION NO. 7: VENUE STIPULATION

This Agreement has and shall be construed as having been made and delivered in the state of Washington and the laws of the state of Washington shall be applicable to its construction and enforcement. Any action at law, suit in equity or judicial proceeding for the enforcement of this Agreement or any provision hereto shall be instituted only in a court of competent jurisdiction within Spokane County, Washington.

SECTION NO. 8: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

SPOKANE COUNTY and KOOTENAI COUNTY specifically agree to observe all federal, state and local laws, ordinances and regulations that have any bearing upon this Agreement.

SECTION NO. 9: MODIFICATION

No modification or amendment of this Agreement shall be valid until the same is reduced to writing and executed with the same formalities as this present Agreement.

SECTION NO. 10: NOTICES

All notices shall be in writing and served on any of the PARTIES at their respective addresses set forth below by personal service; by certified mail, return-receipt requested; or by email with receipt confirmed.

SECTION NO. 11: PARTIES' REPRESENTATIVES

Veena Singh, MD, MPH
Spokane County Medical Examiner
102 S. Spokane Street
Spokane, WA 99202
vsingh@spokanecounty.org

Kootenai County Coroner's Office
Attn: Duke Johnson, MD
P.O. BOX 9000
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816
drjohnson@kcgov.us

SECTION NO. 12: EXECUTION AND APPROVAL

The PARTIES warrant that the officers/individuals executing below have been duly authorized to act for and on behalf of the Party for purposes of confirming this Agreement.

SECTION NO. 13: THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARIES.

This Agreement is intended for the benefit of SPOKANE COUNTY and KOOTENAI COUNTY and not for the benefit of any third parties.

SECTION NO. 14: NON-DISCRIMINATION

Neither PARTY shall discriminate against any person, living or dead, based on race; religion; color; sex; gender identity and expression; pregnancy; childbirth; breastfeeding; medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding; sexual orientation; marital status; age; national origin; ancestry; genetic information; disability; veteran status; or any class protected by local, state, or federal law.

SECTION NO. 15: INDEMNIFICATION

SPOKANE COUNTY shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless KOOTENAI COUNTY, its officers and employees from all claims, demands, or suits in law or equity arising from SPOKANE COUNTY's intentional or negligent acts or breach of its obligations under the Agreement. SPOKANE COUNTY's duty to indemnify shall not apply to loss or liability caused by the intentional or negligent acts of KOOTENAI COUNTY, its officers and employees.

KOOTENAI COUNTY shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless SPOKANE COUNTY, its officers and employees from all claims, demands, or suits in law or equity arising from KOOTENAI COUNTY's intentional or negligent acts or breach of its obligations under the Agreement only to the extent permitted pursuant to Article VIII, Section 3 of the Idaho Constitution and case law. KOOTENAI COUNTY's duty to indemnify shall not apply to loss or liability caused by the intentional or negligent acts of the SPOKANE COUNTY, its officers and employees.

If the comparative negligence of the PARTIES and their officers and employees is a cause of such damage or injury, the liability, loss, cost, or expense shall be shared between the PARTIES in proportion to their relative degree of negligence and the right of indemnity shall apply to such proportion. Where an officer or employee of a party is acting under the direction and control of the other party, the party directing and controlling the officer or employee in the activity and/or

omission giving rise to liability shall accept all liability for the other party's officer or employee's negligence.

Each party's duty to indemnify shall survive the termination or expiration of the Agreement.

Each party waives, with respect to the other party only, its immunity under RCW Title 51, Industrial Insurance and only as necessary to make this indemnity provision enforceable with respect to claims relating to the death or injury of KOOTENAI COUNTY and/or SPOKANE COUNTY employees acting within the scope of this Agreement.

SECTION NO. 16: ALL WRITINGS CONTAINED HEREIN

This Agreement, including the attachments hereto, contains all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the PARTIES. No other understandings, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this Agreement shall be deemed to exist or to bind any of the PARTIES hereto. KOOTENAI COUNTY has read and understands all of this Agreement and now states that no representation, promise or agreement not expressed in this Agreement has been made to induce KOOTENAI COUNTY to execute the same.

SECTION NO. 17: SEVERABILITY

In the event any term or condition of this Agreement or application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other terms, conditions, or applications of this Agreement which can be given effect without the invalid term, condition, or application. To this end the terms and conditions of this Agreement are declared severable.

SECTION NO. 18: NON-EXCLUSIVITY

This Agreement is non-exclusive. During the term of this Agreement, SPOKANE COUNTY reserves the right to enter into agreements with other parties as it deems fit. Nothing contained in this
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Agreement shall be construed to limit in any way SPOKANE COUNTY's right to enter a like or similar agreement or grant a like or similar license to any other entity or party on such terms as SPOKANE COUNTY may in its sole discretion deem appropriate.

SECTION NO. 19: SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS

SPOKANE COUNTY and KOOTENAI COUNTY each binds itself and its partners, successors, executors, administrators, and assigns to the other party of this Agreement and to the partners, successors, executors, administrators, and assigns of such other party, in respect to all covenants of this Agreement. Except as above, neither PARTY shall assign, sublet, convey, or transfer its interest in this Agreement without the written consent of the other.

Nothing herein shall be construed as creating any personal liability on the part of any officer or agent of either County hereto, nor shall it be construed as giving any rights or benefits hereunder to anyone other than the Counties.

SECTION NO. 20: HEADINGS

The article headings in this Agreement have been inserted solely for the purpose of convenience and ready reference. In no way do they purport to, and shall not be deemed to, define, limit, or extend the scope or intent of the articles to which they appertain.

SECTION NO. 21: TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Time is of the essence with respect to each and every provision of this Agreement.

SECTION NO. 22: REQUIRED PROVISIONS UNDER CHAPTER 39.34 RCW AND IDAHO CODE §§ 67-2328 AND 67-2329

- a) **PURPOSE**: See Section No. 1 above.
- b) **DURATION**: See Section No. 2 above.

- c) **ORGANIZATION OF SEPARATE ENTITY AND ITS POWERS:** No new or separate legal or administrative entity is created to administer the provisions of this Agreement.
- d) **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES:** See provisions above.
- e) **AGREEMENT TO BE FILED:** This Agreement shall be listed by subject on each agency's web site or other electronically retrievable public source.
- f) **FINANCING:** Each party shall be responsible for the financing of its contractual obligations under its normal budgetary process.
- g) **TERMINATION:** See Section No. 4 above.
- h) **PROPERTY UPON TERMINATION:** See Section No. 4 above.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the PARTIES have caused this Agreement to be executed on the dates below.



 Duke Johnson, MD
 Kootenai County Coroner

 Date

 Veena Singh, MD, MPH
 Spokane County Medical Examiner

 Date

Kootenai County Commissioners

 Date

 Date

 Date

SIGNED AND EXECUTED this _____ day of _____, 2026

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF SPOKANE COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

CHAIR

ATTEST:

VICE-CHAIR

Ginna Vasquez, Clerk of the Board

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

Legal Consultation Fees

Fee Type	Fee Amount
Review of Records, Reports and Related Literature	\$ 500.00 / hour
Phone and / or Office Consultation	\$ 500.00 / hour
Court Testimony	\$ 600.00 / hour
Court Standby	\$ 600.00 / hour
Travel Time	\$ 300.00 / hour
Deposition	\$ 600.00 / hour
Court Affidavit	\$ 100.00

Miscellaneous Fees

Fee Type	Fee Amount	Comments
Autopsy Report	\$20.00	Request party must be immediate family or surviving next of kin.
Case File Documents	\$20.00	Requesting party must pay \$20.00 fee per document. Requesting party must be immediate family or surviving next of kin.
Biological Specimens	\$100.00	Requesting party is responsible for 100% of shipping costs.
Re-Cuts of Slides	\$50.00 plus the cost of re-cuts of each slide/case	Requesting party is responsible for 100% of shipping costs.
CD Copy of Photos	\$50.00 / CD	Requesting party is responsible for 100% of shipping costs.
Copy of Entire File	\$100.00	This fee includes paper copy only; if the request is made for a CD of photos, an additional \$50.00 fee will be charged.

FEE SCHEDULE FOR AUTOPSY & FORENSIC PATHOLOGY SERVICES

Service: SCMEO	Price
External examination and CT scan: Includes coordination with investigations and administrative services, pathologist and autopsy assistant time, collection and submission of toxicology specimens, basic photography, review of records, full-body CT scan with pathologist interpretation of findings, pathologist opinion on cause of death, final examination report	\$ 900.00
Cranial autopsy: For documentation of head injury or brain disease only; may be coupled with neuropathology consultation; includes single bullet retrieval in SIGSW cases	\$1300
Basic autopsy: Includes Lodox or CT imaging, coordination with investigations and administrative services, pathologist and autopsy assistant time, collection and submission of toxicology and histology specimens, basic photography, review of records, microscopic examination by pathologist, pathologist opinion on cause of death (and, where applicable, manner of death), final examination report	\$ 1800.00
Basic evidence collection/preparation: Includes standard evidence collection in homicides and suspicious deaths, including additional photos and directed x-rays as needed; collection of trace evidence, biological evidence, and evidentiary material from body (ligatures, bullets, etc); packaging the evidence for release to jurisdictional law enforcement agency	\$200.00
Complex autopsy: For cases requiring substantial additional time to document extensive injuries, retrieve bullets or other evidentiary items, or perform investigation and/or procedures necessary to identify an unidentified decedent	\$2200.00
SUID additional services: Includes additional testing and services provided for sudden unexplained infant deaths (<3 years old), such as standard metabolic screening tests, viral cultures, specialized procedures as indicated, additional histology and stains, directed x-rays, and extended review of medical and investigative records. Please Note: the SCMEO requires that the jurisdictional agency complete the SUID investigation form and forward the form to the SCMEO, preferably with doll re-enactment of scene	\$250.00
Decedent Storage fees: Storage fees are assessed after completion of case. If remains are retrieved within five (5) days the fees are waived	\$5.00 Per day
Additional radiology: For additional studies beyond those normally done during basic autopsy and/or basic evidence collection, including detailed imaging of injuries, repeated x-rays for localization of bullets, and dental imaging for identification. Charged per image. Does not include interpretation	\$75.00 per study
Brain removal: For cases in which the decedent is enrolled in a research study; includes removal of brain, preparation of specimens as per study protocol, and shipment of brain to research institution. Does not include pathologist examination of the brain	\$850.00
Records review and COD: For apparently natural deaths in which there are multiple potentially lethal natural diseases and the coroner would otherwise send the case for autopsy to determine which of them caused the death	\$350.00
Specialty consults: For cases requiring anthropology, cardiac pathology, neuropathology, or forensic dental consultation	Actual cost charged by consultant

SPOKANE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

Statement of Policy, Procedure and Practice

Policy Title: PROCEDURES IN OUTSIDE COUNTY CASES

Policy:

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office serves as a regional resource center for many counties in Eastern Washington and the Panhandle of Idaho. Coroners in these jurisdictions contract with the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office for the provision of autopsy services; however, the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has no jurisdictional authority in any of these outside counties with the exception of Pend Oreille County. The same high standards in performance of a forensic autopsy will be followed in all outside county cases, as is expected in cases that come under the legal jurisdiction of the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office.

Procedures and Practices:

INVESTIGATIONS, REQUEST FOR AUTOPSIES:

Investigations come under the authority of the county wherein the death occurred and are not the responsibility of the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office. The exception to this statement is Pend Oreille County: As of January 2025, the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has entered an Interlocal Agreement to provide full Medical Examiner services to Pend Oreille County and is thus responsible for training and overseeing death investigators, gathering investigative information for deaths occurring in Pend Oreille County, determining jurisdiction, and arranging for body transport as needed. For purposes of this policy, deaths occurring in Pend Oreille County are considered to be under the jurisdiction of the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office and Pend Oreille County is not considered to be an "outside county".

When outside counties request autopsy examination, investigative information must be entered into the MDI Worksheet and the Autopsy Authorization Worksheet must be fully completed in MDILog, including information about whether law enforcement or Coroner's office personnel wishes to attend the examination and when the body will arrive at the Spokane County Medical Examiner Facility (entered in the "Special Instructions" or "Case Information" text box). Coordination for body transfer must be made prior to transport of the body to Spokane County. Medical Examiner staff are available after hours, weekends and holidays by phone for this coordination. The sooner the Spokane Medical Examiner's Office is notified, and body transportation arranged, the more efficiently the Spokane County Staff can meet the needs of referral counties. There may be times when staffing or workload precludes same-day or next-day examination; in these instances, this will be communicated to the requesting agency and arrangements will be made accordingly.

To facilitate body transfer, Funeral Home or transport service information must be entered on the Case Administration page of MDILog.

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office must be notified at the time of receipt of request for autopsy if law enforcement will attend the postmortem examination, with appropriate contact information also provided.

Referral county Coroners are required to enter some decedent demographic information as well as a narrative in MDILog. This system allows referral counties to track data relating to their own autopsies but is designed so that the Coroners cannot access data for any other county, including Spokane County. MDILog assigns a unique individual case number for each new case entered. MDILog is used to generate forms and labels used for each autopsy. The case number is used for filing and archiving of case materials. The investigative narrative in MDILog must include scene findings, the sequence of events preceding death, a list of the decedent's medical conditions if known, and other information as is appropriate to good documentation of a detailed scene investigation. An incomplete narrative description of the scene and circumstances of death hinders the autopsy examination. The Medical Examiner administrative staff is available to provide assistance if referral county Coroners are unable to gain access to MDILog.

The autopsy cannot be performed until investigative and logistical information has been provided. While investigations, apart from those in Pend Oreille, are the responsibility of the local agencies, the Deputy Medical Investigators can assist in providing follow-up research required as a part of autopsy, such as retrieval of necessary medical records. Coroners are reminded again that an autopsy performed in a "vacuum" without investigation information is not nearly as valuable as one performed with complete scene investigation information.

THE MEDICAL EXAMINER FACILITY / ENTRANCES

In past decades Medical Examiner autopsies were performed at Providence Holy Family Hospital. In June 2020 the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office moved into a newly constructed, free-standing facility at 102 S. Spokane Street in the City of Spokane. All Medical Examiner autopsies are performed at this facility. Dedicated police vehicle parking is located on E. 1st Avenue next to the Medical Examiner building, near Spokane Street.

The building and perimeter may be accessed by one of two secured entrances:

The general-public walk-in entrance is located on the east side of the building, facing Spokane Street (102 S. Spokane Street). This entrance should be used by anyone attending an autopsy, to facilitate sign-in and direction to the appropriate observation area.

Body transport vehicles are to enter through the facility's vehicle gate from S. Cowley Street (south of 1st Avenue) at the west end of the property and proceed to the south-side garage-door entrance of the Sally Port (attached to the west side of the building). The vehicles will exit this area through the north-side garage door of the Sally Port onto 1st Avenue.

Each of these two entrances are equipped with an audio/video intercom and call button, to be used to contact Medical Examiner staff and gain entrance to the facility.

TRANSPORT OF BODY TO AND RECEIPT IN THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S FACILITY

Body bags are provided to all outside counties, along with evidence-seal tags, which are sequentially numbered. The bodies are to be packaged in the body bags, after an identification band is secured around an ankle or arm, ensuring all body parts are in one bag.

The identification band is to be marked with the decedent's name and MDILog-generated case number. Other identifying case information may be added as deemed appropriate by the outside agencies.

The bags are to be sealed with the numbered evidence-seal tags.

The decedent's name, evidence-seal tag number, and MDILog-generated case number are to be written on the outside of the body bag.

For cases where the decedent is initially unidentified, Coroners are advised not to use identifiers such as John or Jane Doe. It is recommended that unidentified decedents be given a descriptive designation indicating gender if known, the date of death or discovery of the body, and location of where the body was found.

Suggested:

UDM= unidentified male UDF=unidentified female UDR=unidentified remains

+

Numerical date designation excluding year (the case number has the year)

+

Abbreviated location name or description

Example: UDM 09/30 Spokane River

Outside agencies may occasionally use other types of body bags, or other packaging techniques. These are also acceptable as long as the decedent is clearly identified via band or other means, and as long as the integrity of personal property is assured. The bodies received at the Spokane County Medical Examiner Facility cannot be examined if they are received without an identification band on the body itself (not just written on the body bag) or label. The only exception is if law enforcement or the Coroner is present at autopsy and is willing to attest to identification.

Procedures in Outside County Cases

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Medical Examiner Staff will routinely be available to receive a body transported from a referral county to the Medical Examiner's facility, 6:30 AM to 3:30 PM weekdays (Monday through Friday, except holidays).

The receiving of a body transported from a referral county to the Medical Examiners' facility at times outside of the usual weekday hours may be scheduled by calling the office (509) 477-2296. If the call is made after usual office hours, the call will automatically be forwarded to the cell phone of the on-duty medical investigator who will try to arrange and coordinate a scheduled body delivery to/receipt at the Medical Examiner's facility.

RELEASE OF BODIES FROM THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S FACILITY:

It is the responsibility of the outside county to provide the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office with the name of the funeral home or body transport service to notify after completion of autopsy. When bodies are released, this is documented as in any Spokane jurisdiction death (described in separate policy).

Bodies ready for release will be made immediately available for pick-up by the funeral home or body transport service on the day of the examination. Accommodations for pick-ups the day after the examination will be between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM weekdays (Monday through Friday, except holidays).

PERSONAL PROPERTY:

Once a body is received at the Spokane County Medical Examiner Facility, personal property becomes the temporary responsibility of the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office. Clothing will be inventoried and placed in a labeled plastic bag with the decedent on the body cart at the conclusion of autopsy, for release to the funeral home (or submitted in evidence at the request of the police agency having jurisdiction). Other personal property (estimated to have monetary value) will be inventoried at the time of autopsy and described in detail in the Property/Evidence tab within MDILog.

If a law enforcement agency attends the autopsy and desires the personal property as evidence, it will be released to them with written chain-of-custody record. If this is not the case, the personal property will be securely stored at the Spokane County Medical Examiner Facility; or, in the case of an out-of-town funeral home or transport service, released along with the body directly to the funeral home representative or transport agent performing body transport for the referral county Coroner, with appropriate signatures.

Alternatively, if requested, personal property may be mailed at outside county expense to the Coroner having jurisdiction. Arrangements may also be made to have personal property picked up in person by next-of-kin or mailed directly to next-of-kin if requested (this is also done at the expense of the referral county).

BODY STORAGE:

The Medical Examiner's Office is not a long-term body storage facility. Referral county decedents will be held at the facility only if there are portions of the autopsy examination which are not complete. An example of this would be if dental identification has not yet been performed. Another example would be if anthropologic work-up is needed the body will be held until completion of this anthropology examination. Otherwise, efforts should be made to remove bodies in a timely fashion. It is the obligation of the outside agencies to contact the Medical Examiner's Office if release cannot occur within a few days after autopsy. The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office will charge outside counties for any long-term body storage, except when held intentionally for further examination.

NEXT-OF-KIN:

In deaths occurring outside Spokane County, the Spokane Medical Examiner's Office assumes no responsibility for locating or identifying next-of-kin, or for making notification of death to next-of-kin.

The Coroner is responsible for all general communication with family members. Important information about autopsy examination findings will be communicated to the Coroner, but it is the Coroner's judgement to provide any information to the family.

AUTOPSY REPORT/CONFIDENTIALITY:

The autopsy reports generated after examination of decedents from outside counties are confidential. Since the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has no jurisdiction, the office will not release any autopsy reports or information relating to examination to the general public, or to next-of-kin of the decedent. All death investigation case information and all related records and reports are to be kept confidential. Case information should not be accessed or viewed unless there is a clear work-related reason to do so.

When the Medical Examiner's Office receives requests for information about outside county cases, these requests will be referred to the Coroner having jurisdiction. Only with the permission and at the request of the local Coroner, the Medical Examiner's Office in Spokane County may fully cooperate and speak with families who desire information related to autopsy examination. However, Medical Examiner staff reserves the option to decline to speak.

The case pathologist will be available to discuss the case with the Coroner if needed. Completed autopsy reports and toxicology reports are uploaded into MDILog.

MANNER OF DEATH:

An autopsy report prepared after completion of an autopsy for outside counties will include an opinion of cause of death. However, since the investigation is the primary responsibility of the outside Coroner or county, apart from those in Pend Oreille, the manner of death determination is made by the local Coroner.

PAYMENT FOR OUTSIDE AUTOPSY EXAMINATION:

Any changes in fees charged to outside counties will be communicated to the counties in a timely fashion. These are set by Spokane County in conjunction with the Spokane County Medical Examiner Advisory Board and with the approval of the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners. This Advisory Board is made up of representatives from the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners, Prosecutors, Public Defenders, and the Spokane County Law Enforcement Community.

The outside county will be financially responsible for any additional testing or examination deemed necessary for the completion of the autopsy by the Medical Examiner (i.e. histology, clinical chemistry, neuropathology).

IDENTIFICATION:

When remains are transported to the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office as "unidentified remains" the Medical Examiner will assist Coroners in identification. Identification of all decedents is, however, the responsibility of the local Coroner. The Coroner must determine when there is a need for scientific verification of identification; otherwise, it will be assumed by the Medical Examiner that the identification tag on the body bears the correct name. When scientific methods are used for identification, it will be the Coroner's decision whether identification has been adequately confirmed.

SPECIMEN RETENTION

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's staff will use the same high standards in performing autopsies for surrounding counties as required in Spokane County case work. Referral county autopsy cases are reviewed as part of the quality assurance procedures. That is, the procedures outlined under separate policies concerning performance of the autopsy and collection of forensic specimens applies equally to the referral county autopsies.

All surrounding counties who refer autopsies to the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office agree to abide by the Spokane County Medical Examiner's specimen retention policy. This policy provides for scheduled discarding of specimens collected during performance of autopsy. The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office will not hold specimens longer than described in the retention policy for any agency, Coroner, or consultant. If a Coroner has need of placing any specimen on any type of "hold" status, the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office should be contacted immediately. Although Spokane County will not hold the specimens, it will arrange for transfer of autopsy specimens, samples, or evidence to the surrounding county using

appropriate chain-of-evidence procedures. Any costs generated by the transfer of these specimens must be paid by the referral county.

ORGAN DONATION

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has no jurisdiction over deaths in surrounding counties, except for Pend Oreille County. Because of this, it is not within the authority of Spokane County to provide release for any tissue, cornea, or solid organ donation procedure. If a Coroner has released organs or tissues for donation, the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office should be notified prior to autopsy. Recovery may be performed in the referral county, before the body is transported to Spokane, so that the Coroner can fully coordinate all activities. Alternatively, recovery may be performed at the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office, as long as the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office is notified of this intent and the Coroner has coordinated body transport accordingly. The Coroner is responsible, not only for releasing organs/tissues but also for providing information to organ/tissue procurement agencies, such as investigative information, demographic information, and next of kin information as allowed by law.

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office facility has a tissue recovery room designed and intended to be used for postmortem tissue harvesting procedures. Any organ or tissue procurement agency wanting to conduct postmortem tissue harvesting for donation in the Medical Examiner's facility, utilizing the tissue recovery room, must establish a formal written facility-use agreement with Spokane County and pay a facility-use fee to the County.

PARTIAL AUTOPSIES AND EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS WITH COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (CT) SCAN

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office offers multiple examination types, with the appropriate examination type for each case determined by the Medical Examiner in consultation with the Coroner having jurisdiction over the case. If a particular examination type is desired by the Coroner, that information must be conveyed to the Medical Examiner's Office prior to examination and will be taken into consideration by the Medical Examiner as they evaluate the case. If a different examination type is deemed more suitable by the Medical Examiner, that information will be conveyed to the Coroner prior to examination.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL ATTENDING/OBSERVING AUTOPSIES

Members of law enforcement may observe an autopsy for cases of death occurring in their jurisdiction. Referral county Coroners should be in close communication with their local law enforcement regarding the scheduling of an autopsy, and if law enforcement indicates a desire to attend/observe the autopsy, that fact should be recorded in the Case Brief or Investigator Narrative in MDILog, conveyed via email to meautopsy@spokanecounty.org, or conveyed via telephone call to 509-477-2296. The

name of the officer or detective and contact information should be included in any notification.

It is imperative that the member of law attending/observing the autopsy have direct knowledge of the case or to have been fully briefed about the case prior to attending the autopsy. If a member of law enforcement wishes to observe an autopsy as a part of their training to be a detective, they should be accompanied by an experienced fellow officer or detective who has knowledge of the case to be observed.

Members of law enforcement will be allowed to observe an autopsy from one of two observation rooms in the Medical Examiner's facility which have a glass window into an autopsy room through which the autopsy can be observed, protected from biohazard exposure. Both observation rooms are equipped with an intercom system, connected with the autopsy room being observed. Witnesses must sign in, providing name, title, and agency, upon arrival to the facility.

In general, when a case warrants collection of items of evidence, autopsy staff will collect the evidence from the body during the autopsy and transfer the collected items to law enforcement after the autopsy, with written chain-of-custody record made. In rare instances, when a particular autopsy case presents an unusual evidence collection situation, the member of law enforcement observing the autopsy may be allowed into the autopsy room to assist with evidence collection, after donning all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

After the autopsy is completed, the Medical Examiner who conducted the autopsy can be available to discuss the findings with law enforcement, either via the intercom, or in-person in the observation room.

For cases where items of evidence were collected at autopsy for transfer to law enforcement, the detective or officer attending the autopsy will be allowed to drive his or her vehicle into the Medical Examiner's Facility's Sally Port, where the collected items of evidence can be transferred from a member of the autopsy staff in a secure area and loaded into the vehicle protected from the weather.

MASS FATALITY

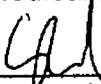
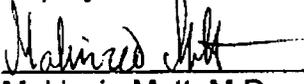
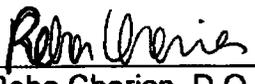
The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has no authority or jurisdictional responsibility in any mass fatality incident except in Spokane County and counties in which the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has agreed to provide death investigation services. For purposes of this policy, mass fatality is defined as greater than 5 deaths from a single scene or event.

ENACTMENT OF NEW POLICIES FOR SURROUNDING COUNTIES

When any Spokane County policies regarding procedures in outside county cases are changed, a copy of the new policy will be sent to all referral counties in a timely fashion.

REFERENCES:

1. Spokane County Medical Examiner's Advisory Board Resolution

 _____ Veena Singh, M.D. Chief Medical Examiner	<u>3/31/2025</u> Date
 _____ Sean Ricciardo, M.D. Deputy Medical Examiner	<u>4/2/25</u> Date
 _____ Makinzie Mott, M.D. Deputy Medical Examiner	<u>4/2/25</u> Date
 _____ Reba Cherian, D.O. Deputy Medical Examiner	<u>04/01/2025</u> Date

Implemented: Nov 2008 Revised: April 2010, June 2012; Sept 2013; August 2015; March 2017; December 2017; August 2017; October 2020; January 2022, April 2022, October 2024

Computer File Name: Procedures in outside county cases