

## What do I do next when a loved one dies?

- Notify all family members of the loved one's death.
- Speak with other family members and discuss with them about funeral arrangements and final disposition.
- Contact a funeral home or crematory of your choosing and make an appointment to meet and discuss with them about funeral arrangements for burial or cremation.
- Once you have chosen a funeral home or crematory, the funeral director will have you sign a body release authorization permit, which the funeral director will transmit to the Coroner/ME's Office.
- Upon completion of the examination or autopsy and the receipt of the signed body release permit, the Coroner/ME's Office will contact the funeral director and authorize the funeral home to pick up and transport your loved one's remains to the funeral home.

Responding Deputy Coroner/Investigator

Responding Law Enforcement Agency

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Notes:

Jefferson County Coroner/  
Medical Examiner's Office  
1515 6th Avenue South, Suite 220  
Birmingham, Alabama 35233  
Phone: 205-930-3603  
Fax: 205-930-3595

[www.jeffconline.jccal.org](http://www.jeffconline.jccal.org)



## Jefferson County Coroner/ Medical Examiner's Office



### Information for the Family

On behalf of the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office, we offer our most sincere condolences to you and your family for the loss of your loved one.

It is our hope that this brochure will assist you during the grieving process and help answer questions about the role of the Medical Examiner.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Coroner/Medical Examiner office is to establish the identity of human remains and to determine the cause, manner, and circumstances surrounding death in all sudden and unexpected deaths occurring in Jefferson County, Alabama.

### **Why is the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office involved?**

Pursuant to State of Alabama Act 79-454, the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office is responsible for investigating all sudden and unexpected deaths occurring in Jefferson County, Alabama.

### **Where was the deceased taken?**

The deceased was transported to the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office morgue:  
Cooper Green Mercy Health Services  
1515 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35233

### **Is it necessary for family to come to the Coroner/ME's Office to identify the deceased?**

No. In most cases visual identification is obtained by investigators at the location of death. In some cases though, positive identification may have to be obtained by one of the following forensic processes: fingerprint, dental, or x-ray comparison, medical implants or devices, DNA, anthropology.

### **Is viewing allowed at the Coroner/ME's Office?**

No. The Coroner/ME's Office does not have an area for viewing. Arrangements for viewing at the funeral home should be made with your funeral director.

### **Will an examination or autopsy be performed?**

Yes. An examination is performed in every case assumed, but depending on the circumstances surrounding the death an autopsy is not always required.

### **Why is an examination/autopsy necessary?**

An examination/autopsy is necessary to accurately determine cause, manner, and circumstances surrounding the death, so to satisfy statutory requirements, for the good of public health, and to assist with potential civil and criminal litigation.

### **Will an examination or autopsy prevent a funeral service or viewing?**

No. These procedures do not prevent the deceased from being viewed or preclude a funeral service.

### **Do I have to pay for the autopsy?**

No. Examinations and autopsy costs are paid for with public funds.

### **How long will the decedent remain at the Coroner/ME's Office?**

Typically the examination or autopsy will be performed the day following death. Normally the deceased can be released to the funeral home of the family's choice on that day.

### **Can I get a preliminary report?**

No. There are no preliminary reports.

### **How do I obtain a copy of an examination/autopsy report?**

The final examination/autopsy report is generally available 4-6 weeks from the date of death. The family is provided one copy of the report at no charge. To obtain a copy of the final report, contact the Coroner/ME's Office Monday through Friday, 8:30am – 4:00pm. *Note: The Coroner/ME's Office final report is public record and must be released to the public or media if properly requested, but we will strive to notify family first.*

### **How do I obtain personal property?**

Personal property that was transported with the deceased to the morgue is inventoried and secured in the Coroner/ME's Office property room. Next-of-kin will be notified by staff when personal property is available to be picked up. Once notified, the next-of-kin, or his/her designee, can retrieve the property during normal business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. The individual retrieving the property should bring his/her personal identification, if not; the property will not be authorized to be released.

Pursuant to Code of Alabama 1975, Title 15-4-10 (Appendix 2), any personal property not claimed by family will be transferred to the Jefferson County Treasure to be sold at county auction.

### **How do I obtain a death certificate?**

There are two ways to obtain copies of the death certificate:

1. Your chosen funeral home or crematory can assist you with obtaining copies of the death certificate.
2. You can also contact:

Jefferson County Health Department  
205-933-9110

[www.jcdh.org/CommunityServices/VitalRecords.aspx](http://www.jcdh.org/CommunityServices/VitalRecords.aspx)

Alabama Vital Records office  
334-206-5418

[www.adph.org/vitalrecords](http://www.adph.org/vitalrecords).

*Note: The Coroner/ME's Office cannot issue death certificates.*