

Q. Why is the Coroner involved in the death of my loved one?

- A. The following is a list of criteria set forth within the California Government Code which require death investigations by the Coroner. (GC 27491) **Not all deaths are Coroner cases.
1. All violent, sudden, or unusual deaths.
 2. All unattended deaths.
 3. Deaths where a decedent has not been seen by a physician (20) days prior to death.
 4. Deaths related to/following known or suspected self-induced or criminal abortion.
 5. Known or suspected homicide, suicide, or accidental poisoning.
 6. Deaths known or suspected as resulting in whole, or in part from related to accident or injury either old or recent.
 7. Deaths due to drowning, fire, hanging, gunshot, stabbing, cutting, exposure, starvation acute alcoholism, drug addiction, aspiration strangulation, or where the suspected cause of death is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
 8. Deaths in whole or part caused by criminal means.
 9. Deaths associated with a known or alleged rape, or crime against nature.
 10. Deaths in prison or while under sentence.
 11. Deaths known or suspected as due to contagious disease and constituting a public hazard.
 12. Deaths from occupational diseases/hazards.
 13. Deaths of patients in state mental hospitals, serving the mentally disabled and operated by the State Dept of Mental Health.
 14. Deaths of patients in state hospitals serving the developmentally disabled and operated by the State Dept Developmental Services.

***Additional criteria can be determined by the Sheriff/Coroner:

Q. Where is my loved one being taken?

- A. Your loved one will be taken to the Coroner facility located in the city of Merced.

Q. Can I come and see my loved one?

- A. No. The visitation of your loved one should be done at the funeral home. It is not permitted at the Coroner facility.

Q. What should I do now?

- A. Contact a funeral establishment of your choice, and advise them as to what has transpired.

Q. When can we have the funeral?

- A. The funeral establishment and the Deputy Coroner assigned to the case, will work together to arrange for the release of your loved one as soon as possible.

Q. Will there be an autopsy performed?

- A. Not all deaths that fall under California Coroner laws require an autopsy. The Deputy Coroner assigned to the case, will determine if an autopsy is needed to complete the investigation.

Q. Why are autopsies performed?

- A. There are a number of reasons why, however, the basic reason is to determine a cause and/or manner of death. Another reason may be to collect evidence to present in court.

Q. Can I get a copy of the Coroner's report?

- A. Yes. The autopsy, toxicology, and Coroner's reports can be purchased; please call the office for cost and availability. Autopsy reports are normally not available until the case is concluded.

Q. When can I find out the cause of death?

- A. In an uncomplicated death, final cause and manner may be determined within 90 days. If the cause is "pending" and you have insurance issues, we may be able to resolve them by a

letter or phone call from our office - *please call and let us know.*

Q. When can I obtain a death certificate?

- A. You may obtain the certified copies, by ordering them through the funeral establishment you have selected, or through the Merced Co. Health Dept - Vital Statistics. The Coroner division will not provide death certificates.

Q. Who will require a death certificate?

- A. Bank Accounts, Insurance Policies, Veteran's Administration, Social Security, Income tax, Victim/Witness, Stocks & Bonds.

Q. Where are the funeral establishments located within Merced County?

- A. The following are located in Merced County:
1. Evergreen Memorial Park & Funeral Home
1480 B Street Merced, CA 383-4651
 2. Hillview Funeral Chapel
515 First Avenue Gustine, CA 892-6112
 3. Ivers & Alcorn Funeral Home
3050 NWinton Way Atwater, CA 358-4931
901 W. Main Street Merced, CA 722-6201
 4. Stratford Evans Merced Funeral Chapel
1490 B Street Merced, CA 722-4191
 5. Whitehurst Funeral Home
2350 Blossom Dos Palos, CA 392-3481
16524 So Center Los Banos, CA 826-4242
 6. Whitton Family Funeral Service
740 W. 19th Street Merced, CA 384-1119
 7. Wilson Family Funeral Chapel
1290 Winton Way Atwater, CA 358-7700

Q. If I have any other questions, who do I contact?

- A. Call the Merced County Sheriff's Department-Coroner Division (209) 385-7369. Anyone can usually help with any questions you may have. Our normal business hours are M-F 8am - 5pm.