

PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORONERS ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

The Coroner or Medical Examiner (ME), as an elected or appointed official of the county for which he/she serves, holds a position of trust with the people of that county. In order that they might maintain confidence in that office this code is proposed as a guideline to which a Coroner/ME should adhere.

1. The Coroner/ME shall perform his/her duties without fear, prejudice or partiality towards any person or institution.
2. The Coroner/ME shall respect the religious views of the deceased and their family in regard to autopsy examination unless that examination is necessary to prove or disprove criminal negligence on the part of an individual or institution.
3. The Coroner/ME, in the delegation of his/her investigative powers to another individual as his/her deputy, shall insure that the individual so authorized is knowledgeable of the laws concerning the Coroner/ME's office and of this Code of Ethics.
4. The Coroner/ME shall proceed in the public interest to carry out diligently and as rapidly as possible the duties and responsibilities as required by law.
5. The Coroner/ME shall have regard for the fact that he/she is performing a public duty and that his/her actions and decisions affect the public interest as well as the interest of private individuals.
6. The Coroner/ME shall accept his/her share of responsibility towards society in relation to matters of public health, health and safety education and legislation affecting the health and well-being of the community.
7. The Coroner/ME shall not, in the discharge of his/her duties, make decisions beyond the scope of his/her personal expertise and knowledge but shall seek guidance from the appropriate source or sources.
8. The Coroner/ME shall assist law enforcement agencies and the, officials involved in the administration of justice in the discharge of their duties within the bounds set by the laws affecting the Coroner/ME's office.
9. The Coroner/ME shall not interfere in an investigation or inquest which has been undertaken by a Coroner/ME in another jurisdiction and will not initiate an investigation or inquest in another jurisdiction unless directed to do so by appropriate authority.
10. A Coroner/ME shall disqualify himself/herself from acting at an investigation or inquest where any actual conflict of interest appears to exist.
11. The Coroner/ME, presiding at an inquest, shall exercise his/her duties and responsibilities so as to assist the jury to return a fair, impartial and proper verdict based on the evidence.

12. When presiding at an inquest the Coroner/ME shall instruct the jury and receive the jury's verdict with impartiality.
13. A Coroner/ME shall bear in mind that an inquest is designed to determine and make public the facts surrounding a particular death and that an inquest shall be opened to the public as specified in the Pennsylvania Statutes.
14. The Coroner/ME shall not conduct himself/herself in a manner which might tend to bring his/her office into disrepute or affect public confidence in that office.
15. The Coroner/ME shall not act in a manner designed to or having the effect of publicizing or enhancing his/her medical practice, funeral establishment or other personal occupational endeavor within the community.
16. The Coroner/ME shall strive to increase in knowledge of matters pertinent to the proper and effective performance of his/her duties and where the possible shall attend educational programs conducted by the Pennsylvania State Coroner/ME's Association, Law Enforcement Agencies and other groups.
17. The Coroner/ME shall avoid making any comments concerning morality of the conduct of person concerned in an investigation.
18. A Coroner/ME shall respect the confidentiality of any information received by him/her in the performance of his/her duties.
19. The Coroner/ME shall not release the names of the deceased individuals until such times as the families of the deceased have been notified.
20. The Coroner/ME shall assure the family of the deceased free choice of funeral establishment or other means of disposition of the remains.
21. All Coroner/MEs, Chief Deputy Coroner/MEs and Deputy Coroner/MEs shall refrain from serving as the Personal Representative of a decedent's estate of which he/she has jurisdiction as Coroner/ME.

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