



International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

Collaboration · Education · Accreditation

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through collaboration, education and accreditation.

IACME POSITION STATEMENT

CORONERS AND MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATORS (MDI) SHOULD BE DESIGNATED FIRST RESPONDERS

Coroners and Medicolegal Death Investigators (MDI) are exposed to numerous risk factors in the line of their public service duties. These factors increase their risk for exposure to biohazard contaminants, infectious diseases and potential violence, all of which increase the threat to their physical safety.

The medicolegal death investigation community has a high level of exposure and risk to life threatening factors when responding to death scenes to include; handling and transporting bodies/human remains; when in close interactions with family members and/or bystanders when conducting forensic interviews; and/or when notifying them of a death. There is additional risk of exposure to contaminants and infectious disease during the performance of forensic scene investigations, post mortem examinations, forensic autopsies and when obtaining/handling and testing biological specimens.

First responders are at a great risk of exposure when interacting with patients, decedents and the general public. Coroners and MDIs are on the front lines alongside their counterparts from emergency medical services, law enforcement, fire department personnel and health care providers. In many jurisdictions, especially those in rural areas, the Coroner or MDI may be the only individual who comes into contact with family and bystanders to be able to determine other potentially ill or exposed persons.

Those currently designated as first responders, whether at the local, state or federal level, qualify for additional benefits such as hazardous duty pay, enhanced paid time off or sick leave, and enhanced line-of-duty death benefits. Coroners and MDIs should be eligible for these additional benefits and therefore should be designated First Responders.

The official position of the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners is that all Coroners and Medicolegal Death Investigators receive First Responder designation at the local, state and federal levels to ensure these public servants are eligible for benefits associated with First Responder classification.

Respectfully,

The IACME Board of Directors