

Pennsylvania State Coroners Association
Administrative Guideline

This Guideline was developed as a means to help Coroners and Staff with the sale of reports and documents

First, we need to define the following: Standard, Guideline, and Best Practice

A **Standard** is the minimum level of acceptable performance

A **Guideline or Principle** is a suggested level of performance, but not a standard

A **Best Practice** is the most rigorous level of performance and is based on current knowledge without resource limitations. (Shall; cannot deviate from; required)

According to Statute, ***16 P.S.C.A. § 1252-B: Fees: The coroner shall charge and collect a fee of \$500 for an autopsy report, \$100 for a toxicology report, \$100 for an inquisition or coroner's report, \$50 for a cremation or disposition authorization and other fees as may be established from time to time for other reports or documents requested by nongovernmental agencies in order to investigate a claim asserted under a policy of insurance or to determine liability for the death of the deceased. The fees collected under this subsection shall be accounted for and paid to the county treasurer in accordance with section 1760 and shall be used to defray the expenses involved in the county complying with the training of coroners or coroner office personnel, as may be required or authorized by this or any other act.***

The Statute clearly states that certain fees *SHALL* be paid for specific reports generated by or for the Office of the Coroner. These fees are set to help offset the costs for forensic testing and to assist for educational training expenses.

As we know *SHALL* is a command word and according to Webster's dictionary, it is defined as; "used in laws, regulations, or directives to express what is mandatory."

According to the Statute, fees shall not be assessed for reports provided to other Governmental Agencies. A Governmental Agency may be but not limited to Law Enforcement, District Attorney's Office, OSHA, FBI, DEA or any other Government Agency.

The Statute states that fees can be established for other reports or documents. Webster's dictionary defines a document as; an original or official paper relied on as the basis, proof, or support of something; something (such as a photograph or recording) that serves as evidence or proof. It is recommended that the Coroner's Office working with your County's Board of Commissioners establish a fee schedule, set by County Ordinance, in conjunction with amounts set by statute and any other amount set by statute or schedule.

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A suggested Fee Schedule can be as follows:

• Administrative Fee	\$35.00*
• Autopsy Report	\$500.00
• Toxicology Report	\$100.00
• Coroner's Report	\$100.00
• Cremation Authorization	\$50.00
• Forensic Radiology Report	\$100.00
• Forensic Odontology	\$100.00
• Forensic Ophthalmology	\$100.00
• Any Other Forensic Document	\$100.00
• Digital Photo-Documents (photographs)	\$25.00/each

*These are recommended amounts, except
for those mandated by State Statute.*

- Administrative Fee is charged to all requests for report

Remember, the Section 16 P.S.C.A. § 1252-B, requires Coroners to charge for reports and documents. Majority of said reports and documents are requested and purchased by attorneys, insurance companies, organ procurement organizations, medical entities and at times, the legal next of kin. One recommendation to consider is when the legal next of kin requests to purchase a report(s), you may want to verify with the next of kin, about are they purchasing the report(s) for? Are they purchasing the report(s) for themselves or at the request of their attorney or insurance company? If that is the case, you may want to advise the next of kin, that their attorney or insurance company should be requesting the report(s) themselves. At times, these agents might request the next of kin to make the purchase to avoid the financial burden on themselves.

If the legal next of kin does not want or cannot purchase a report(s) due to costs, one recommendation is to schedule a meeting with the member and review the report(s) with them.

Regarding the sale of photo-documents (photographs) it is suggested these documents be limited to plaintiff/defendant's attorneys and insurance companies.

As always, remain consistent in each and every case requests you receive regarding the request of reports and documents.