



MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATOR

Department: Medical Examiner

Job Class: 902800

Pay Range: Professional 05

FLSA: Non-Exempt

Represented: Yes

Classification descriptions are intended to present a descriptive list of the range of duties performed by employees in the class. Classification descriptions are not intended to reflect all duties performed within the job.

GENERAL FUNCTION:

This is technical work in the office of the Pierce County Medical Examiner. An employee in this classification is responsible for performing a variety of duties, including the investigation of deaths as mandated by RCW 68.50, performing laboratory technician functions and assisting with autopsies as required.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Answer telephones, radio calls, and pager calls and receive reports of deaths.
- Make preliminary determinations concerning medical examiner jurisdiction for reported deaths.
- Respond to calls relating to deaths.
- As appropriate, examine death scenes and dead bodies and confer with appropriate parties which include witnesses, family, friends, co-workers, law enforcement officials and medical/health care personnel to gather information about deaths and ascertain circumstances, medical history and probable cause of death.
- Take photographs of death scenes and prepare death scene diagrams.
- Transport human remains and associated physical evidence.
- Write complete and comprehensive statements/reports of investigation and other reports to support establishment of cause and manner of death.
- Testify in court, as required.
- Maintain regular, predictable and punctual attendance during regularly scheduled work hours at assigned worksite.
- Perform the physical requirements of the position; work within the established working conditions of the position.
- Meet the traveling requirements of the position.
- Work a flexible schedule which includes evenings, weekends, holidays and overtime.
- Routinely and safely lift and carry heavy objects, including the moving of dead bodies.

OTHER JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Perform other job functions as assigned.
- Arrange and assist in postmortem examinations, which include body preparation, dissection under supervision and taking tissue and fluid samples.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED: Work is performed under the direction of an administrative superior. In field situations, however, Medicolegal Death Investigators must be able to perform the job duties independent of direct supervision. Work is reviewed in progress and upon completion by a supervisor. Individuals in this classification do not supervise or lead other employees.

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WORK ENVIRONMENT: The work environment characteristics described herein are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of the position. The Medicolegal Death Investigator works inside and outside in a variety of working conditions, in inclement weather, and is required to safely drive a motor vehicle. Work is performed in the field at death scenes, in a laboratory/morgue setting or in the office. Travel to various work sites is required on a daily basis as a routine part of the job. Incumbents are required to use considerable independent judgment and work under a stressful working environment. Medicolegal Death Investigators are exposed to disease, illness and bio-hazardous materials on a regular basis while in the field. There is exposure to and utilization of hazardous chemicals in the routine performance of their job duties on a daily basis. Prolonged periods of attention to detailed information is required. Work requires flexible schedules, overtime, work on holidays, evenings, weekends, various shifts and availability on-call.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: The physical demands described herein are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the position. This position has a variety of physical requirements of varying degrees based on numerous differing work circumstances. A Medicolegal Death Investigator may be the only person responding to the scene, which will require the employees to lift and transfer human remains to gurney and vehicle. Incumbents may need to work in tight quarters when examining a scene; climb rocks and other uneven terrain to access a scene; and drive long distances to various scenes for investigation. Required physical activities include walking, standing, sitting, digital dexterity, talking, hearing, seeing, balancing, climbing, crawling, kneeling, and bending, stooping, twisting, crouching, reaching, lifting, carrying, dragging, and pushing/pulling, and computer keyboarding/typing. A Medicolegal Death Investigator must be able to safely carry and lift heavy objects including dead bodies; safely drive a vehicle and operate other required equipment in a safe and lawful manner for the protection/safety of the public, self and of other employees.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Knowledge of:

- State and local laws regarding deaths and human remains.
- Methods, techniques, equipment and practices of handling deceased individuals.
- Techniques used in interviewing, investigating and report writing.
- Forensic photography.
- Approved methods and procedures for evidence collection and processing.
- Standard safety procedures.
- Standard office practices and chain of custody procedures.

Skill in:

- Objective observation.
- Effective communication – verbal and written.

Ability to:

- Make a preliminary finding as to probable cause of death.
- Assist in autopsies, as required.
- Participate in various training programs as required.
- Work as a member of a team including maintaining teamwork with other employees, scheduling your own work assignments through priority and assisting other employees in times of overload or high priority.

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- Make independent judgments and to initiate appropriate action while operating under broad supervisory guidelines.
- Prepare clear and comprehensive written reports.
- Deal tactfully and courteously with the public.
- Establish and maintain effective, productive and cooperative working relationships both inter- and intra- departmental and with other agencies and jurisdictions.
- Effectively manage time and work independently with minimal supervision.
- Communicate effectively and persuasively both verbally and in writing, to audiences of various social, educational and economic backgrounds.
- Operate and utilize various department maintained electronic databases and electronic equipment or other specialty equipment.
- Testify accurately and with professional demeanor in Court.
- Learn assigned tasks readily and adhere to prescribed routines
- Maintain confidentiality and discretion on sensitive and confidential matters.
- Effectively coordinate, perform, and complete multiple duties and assignments concurrently and in a timely manner.
- Physically perform the essential functions of the classification.
- Meet the travel requirements of the position.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY:

Education and/or training equivalent to two years of college, community college, university, law enforcement, or military in the fields of nursing, natural science, forensic science, paramedical or criminal justice is required. Experience in death investigation preferred. Registry Certification with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation (ABMDI) is required within two years of employment. Must maintain certification while employed in this classification. Board Certification with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation (ABMDI) is preferred. A four-year degree in a natural sciences discipline or a death investigation or health sciences-related field (e.g., nursing, forensic science, or criminal justice) is highly desirable. Experience and education may substitute for the recruiting requirements. Possession of a valid Washington State driver's license.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS AND/OR QUALIFICATIONS: An employee in this position is subject to 24-hour availability and must be willing to work non-standard hours as required. Satisfactory physical condition, as evidenced by a County-approved physical examination, may be required as a condition of employment.