

## What is a Coroner and what does the Coroner's Office do?

In most Parishes, the Coroner is a licensed Physician who has been elected into the position of Coroner. Among other tasks, one of the primary duties of the Coroner is to perform Death Investigations. The Coroner does *not* investigate all deaths and does *not* order an autopsy in all deaths.

## My loved one has died and the Coroner Investigator came out. What does that mean?

Louisiana law requires the Coroner (or Coroner Investigator) to investigate certain deaths. In most instances, this is a very routine part of the death process (just like paramedics or police coming out when someone dies). If the coroner investigator came out when your loved one died, it was due to the requirements of Louisiana law. The Coroner investigator would have performed certain tasks, likely including an examination. Depending on circumstances, the Coroner may or may *not* have ordered an autopsy.

## What is my next step now that my loved one has died?

Your next step is to contact a funeral home. Whether an autopsy is ordered or not, you will need to know which funeral home you are going to select for your loved one. The funeral home staff will help you with the steps you need to take at their facility. Once you have decided on a funeral home, be sure and contact the Coroner's Office and let us know which funeral home you have chosen. If your loved one is at our facility, as soon as we are able, we will release your loved one. (Local funeral home names are listed on our website as a helpful resource).

*Please accept our condolences for the loss of your loved one. Our staff is here to assist you in any way we can.*

—

*During this difficult time, you may want to reach out to trusted family, friends, clergy, counselors and/or other professionals for a support network,*

—

**Dr. Todd G. Thoma**  
Caddo Parish Coroner

—

*This pamphlet is provided to help answer frequently asked questions you may have. However, if you should have any additional questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us .*

**The Investigator for this case is:**

---

*You may also visit the Caddo Parish Coroner's Office website for more information:*

[www.caddocoroner.com](http://www.caddocoroner.com)



**Caddo Parish Coroner's Office**  
*Serving all cities and townships within Caddo Parish*

**Office (318) 226-6881**  
**Fax (318) 841-1332**

**Office hours: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm**

**Location & Mailing Address:**  
**2900 Hearne Avenue**  
**Shreveport, LA 71103**



### **Is my loved one's body at your facility?**

If an autopsy was ordered by the Coroner's office, then your loved one was taken to our autopsy facility. Upon completion of the autopsy, your loved one will be released to the funeral home the family has chosen. If the Coroner did not order an autopsy, your loved one was most likely picked up from the hospital or residence by the funeral home.

### **Will I be able to view my loved one?**

The Coroner's office does not allow families to view deceased persons at our facility. If conditions allow for you to view your loved one, you will do that at the funeral home once the funeral home has picked your loved one up.

### **How can I get my loved one released to a funeral home?**

If the Coroner picked up your loved one, the next of kin needs to select a funeral home and then inform the Coroner's Office which funeral home was selected. As soon as the Coroner Investigator is able to, he/she will release your family member to that funeral home. If there was no autopsy or any other reason for the Coroner to transport your loved one, then your loved one is most likely already at the funeral home chosen by family.

### **What do I do if I cannot afford to pay for a funeral service, burial, or cremation?**

You will still need to reach out to funeral homes and find one that is willing to work with families in this type of situation. The Caddo Parish Coroner's Office does not pay for funeral or burial services for families.

### **How can I get an autopsy ordered?**

An autopsy is ordered by the Coroner only in certain circumstances. However, if the Coroner did *not* order an autopsy and the family still wishes to have an autopsy performed, the family may locate a pathologist on their own and request a *private* autopsy. In private autopsies, the full financial responsibility will belong to the family.

### **How much does an autopsy cost?**

If an autopsy is ordered by the Coroner, the autopsy will be performed at no cost to the family. If an autopsy is *not* ordered by the Coroner, and the family orders a private autopsy, the cost is set by the pathologist the family hires. The Coroner does not set that cost and is not responsible for it.

### **How can I get the Autopsy Report and how long does it take?**

One copy of the Autopsy/Toxicology Report may be obtained by the *legal next of kin*. If legal next of kin wishes to receive a copy of an Autopsy/Toxicology Report, they must fill out an Autopsy and Toxicology Report Request Form and provide a copy of their photo identification. This can be done in person at our office or through the steps listed on our website.

(Please note: The finalized Autopsy Report takes at least 4-6 weeks to complete, sometimes longer. We cannot release the report until it is finalized).

### **How can I get the Death Certificate and how long does it take?**

The Death Certificate comes from the funeral home you chose. Contact the funeral home you made arrangements with to request copies of the death certificate.

### **How do I obtain my loved one's property?**

The legal next of kin may contact the Investigator that is handling the case to ask if our office collected any personal items. If our office did collect property, the Investigator will be able to let the next of kin know when those items will be ready for release.