

Coroner Information

Coroner's involvement

The Los Angeles County coroner's office is required by state law to inquire into and determine the circumstances, manner and cause of all deaths that are, or seem to be, sudden, violent, unusual or deaths in which the decedent has not been seen by a physician 20 days prior to death.

The coroner's office has jurisdiction over some children's deaths, particularly those that involve sudden death, death due to trauma, children who die within 24 hours of admission and children who die of unknown causes.

If the coroner's office is investigating the death of your loved one, UCLA's Office of Decedent Affairs can provide you with the case number assigned by the county, which you will need when contacting the coroner's office.

Be sure to tell your mortuary if the coroner's office is investigating your loved one's death as a delay in the release of the body may impact the timing of your arrangements. If religious beliefs preclude an autopsy, please discuss your concerns with the coroner.

Important phone numbers for the Los Angeles County coroner's office are (323) 343-0512 or (323) 343-0714 after 5 pm and on weekends and holidays.

Q. Where will my relative/friend be taken?

A. He or she will be taken to the coroner's office:
Main Facility (323) 343-0714
104 North Mission Road, Los Angeles, CA 90033

Q. Is it necessary for me to come to the coroner's office to identify the body?

A. No. In a majority of the cases, visual identification is not required. Should it become necessary for you to come in or provide other records or X-rays, you will be contacted.

Q. Is viewing allowed?

A. No. The coroner's facility is not designed to accommodate viewing. Arrangements can be made at the funeral home for viewing.



Q. How long will it take before my relative/friend is released from the coroner's office?

A. Generally it should not take more than two to three days. Your funeral director will coordinate the release on your behalf.

Q. Will I be charged for other coroner services?

A. The County is required to assess certain fees for transportation and storage. You will be asked to pay this fee by your funeral service provider.

Q. Where can I obtain a death certificate?

A. Death certificates are filed with the County Health Department by your funeral director. Should you require certified copies, they can be ordered through the funeral home or they may be purchased from the Los Angeles County Health Department, at 1313 North Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 (213) 240-7816 or the Registrar/Recorder at 12400 E. Imperial Hwy., Norwalk, CA 90650 (562) 462-2137.



Q. When is the death certificate issued?

A. A death certificate is issued after the examination is completed. Occasionally, more extensive testing is required, in which case an interim or deferred death certificate is issued, which will allow the family to make funeral arrangements. A final death certificate will be issued following completion of special testing.

Q. Will an autopsy be performed?

A. The coroner will decide if an autopsy is necessary to establish the cause and circumstances of death. He or she may not perform an autopsy if the cause of death can be determined to be from "natural causes" and the deceased has been under the care of a physician who knows the medical history and will furnish the coroner with information relative to the probable cause of death.

Q. What about tissue/organ donation?

A. You may be contacted by an organ/tissue transplant coordinator. With your consent, many types of tissues may be donated to help others. If you are interested in donation, call the Tissue Donation Hotline at (800) 528-9500 as soon as possible. A representative will be available to answer your questions 24 hours a day.

Q. Will autopsy reports be available?

A. Yes. You may obtain a copy by calling the coroner's Document Desk at (323) 343-0512, Monday through Friday, from 8 am to 5 pm. At that time, you will be informed of the cost of this service and how this document or any coroner records can be obtained.

Q. If my relative/friend was in the military, who should I contact for information?

A. Persons who have served in the Armed Forces, were honorably discharged and meet other service requirements may be entitled to a Veteran's burial. For information, contact the L.A. County Veteran's Affairs Office at (213) 253-2677. For information on Military, Veterans or Social Security benefits, contact your funeral director.



Q. What should I do while my loved one's case is being reviewed?

- A.** As soon as possible, select a funeral home and inform the funeral director that the death is being handled by the coroner's office. Ask the funeral director to contact the coroner's office so final arrangements can be made. If someone other than a funeral director is making arrangements for the family, the coroner must receive a notarized written authorization, which must be signed by the legal next of kin, to release the deceased. Persons who reside at a distant location may send a FAX directly to the coroner's office. The following wording should be used:

CORONER, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,
RELEASE THE REMAINS OF MY (relationship and
name of decedent, case #)

TO (name of funeral director selected)

SIGNED (name):

RELATIONSHIP:

PHONE NUMBER:

CORONER FAX NUMBER
(323) 223-5786 OR (323) 222-7041

If a body is to be shipped to a mortuary outside the County, the local mortuary, as well as the distant mortuary, must be identified in the FAX.

