

**Q. WHAT ABOUT TISSUE/ORGAN DONATION?**

**A.** In conjunction with One Legacy, we support the donation of organs and tissues. With consent, many types of organs and tissues may be donated to help others. If you are interested in donation, please call the Organ & Tissue Donor Referral Hotline at (800) 338-6112 as soon as possible. A representative will be available to answer your questions 24 hours a day.

**Q. WILL AN AUTOPSY BE PERFORMED?**

**A.** The Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner will determine what level of examination is warranted on any given case in order to determine cause and manner of death. Permission from families is not required. Not all cases will require an autopsy. Contact us for further information on the status of your loved ones case.

**Q. ARE TISSUES, ORGANS, BLOOD AND/OR BODY FLUIDS RETAINED AFTER THE AUTOPSY AND RELEASE OF THE BODY?**

**A.** Yes, if the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner's believes it will assist the inquiry into the cause or manner of death, the decedent's tissue(s)/organ(s)/body fluid(s) may be retained for analysis and/or evidentiary purposes pursuant to California Government Code Section 27491.4. Tissues/organs/body fluids retained at autopsy or as part of any Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner investigative procedure will be disposed of pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 7054.4.

**Q. WILL AN AUTOPSY REPORT BE AVAILABLE TO ME?**

**A.** Yes. You may obtain a copy by calling the Department of Medical Examiner - Coroner's Document Desk at (323) 343-0695, Monday through Friday, from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. At that time, you will be informed of the cost of this service and how this document may be obtained.

*We hope the advice and counseling provided by your Funeral Director and the information provided in this pamphlet will help you during this time of loss. However, should you need additional assistance, please telephone our office at (323) 343-0695 during regular business hours. After regular business hours, weekends and holidays, please call (323) 343-0714.*

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
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**SACHI HAMAI**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Information from the  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Medical Examiner-  
Coroner**



**1104 N. Mission Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90033  
Business hours  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
(323) 343-0695  
After 5:00 p.m.  
Weekends and Holidays  
(323) 343-0714 - 24 hours**

**Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, M.D.**  
**Interim Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner**

**Q. WHERE WILL MY RELATIVE/FRIEND BE TAKEN?**

**A.** He/She will be taken to the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner's main facility located at:

**1104 N. Mission Road,  
Los Angeles, California 90033  
(323) 343-0714 - (24-hrs)**

**Q. IS IT NECESSARY FOR ME TO COME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER- 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 visit or bring other records or x-rays, a Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner representative will contact you.

**Q. IS VIEWING ALLOWED?**

**A.** No. The Department of Medical Examiner- Coroner's facility is not designed to accommodate viewing. Arrangements for viewing may be made at the selected funeral home.

**Q. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE BEFORE MY RELATIVE/ FRIEND IS RELEASED FROM YOUR 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 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER - CORONER SERVICES?**

**A.** The County is required to assess certain fees for transportation and handling. You will be billed by the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner for these services.

**Q. WHERE CAN I OBTAIN A DEATH CERTIFICATE?**

**A.** Death Certificates are filed with the County's Department of Public Health by the Funeral Director. Should you require certified copies, they can be ordered through the funeral home or they may be purchased from:

- 1) Los Angeles County Public Health  
Vital Records Office  
313 North Figueroa Street, Room L-1  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 240-7816
- 2) Los Angeles County  
Registrar Recorder  
12400 E. Imperial Hwy.  
Norwalk, CA 90650  
(562) 462-2137

**Q. WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?**

**A.** Select a funeral home and inform the Funeral Director that the death is being handled by the Department of Medical Examiner - Coroner. Ask them to please notify us that they will be handling the arrangements. Our office does not select funeral homes nor do we make arrangements. In the event someone is making the arrangements for the family, the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner must be provided with a notarized written authorization to release the deceased, signed by the legal next of kin. Should he/she reside at a distant location, they may send a FAX directly to the funeral home. The following format should be used:

**DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER- CORONER  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,  
RELEASE THE REMAINS OF MY (relationship and name of decedent,  
Department of Medical Examine-Coroner case #) TO (name of Funeral  
Director selected).  
SIGNED: (name) \_\_\_\_\_  
RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER - CORONER FAX NUMBER:  
(323) 224-8979 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 specifically identified in the FAX.

**Q. THERE ARE NO FUNDS FOR BURIAL, WHAT CAN I DO?**

**A.** If the deceased or the legal next of kin do not have sufficient funds for burial, the alternative may be County disposition. In these circumstances, proof of indigence is required. The legal next of kin should contact the Department of Medical Examiner - Coroner's Notification Unit at (323) 343-0755 and additional information will be made available. If County disposition is authorized, there may be substantial delays in receiving a death certificate and as a consequence, certain benefits.

**Q. MY RELATIVE/FRIEND WAS IN THE MILITARY, WHO CAN 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 Military and Veteran's Affairs Office at (877) 4LAVETS or (213) 744-4831. For more information on Veterans or Social Security benefits, contact your funeral director.

**Q. HOW AND WHEN CAN PERSONAL POSSESSIONS BE CLAIMED?**

**A.** Any of a decedent's personal possessions in the custody of the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner, may be claimed by the legal next of kin. Governmental documents (driver's licenses, passports, military identification cards) will not be released to the next of kin. These documents will be returned to the issuing agency for disposition. To avoid any inconvenience to you, please call the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner's Personal Property Section at (323) 343-0515, before coming into the office. The Personal Property Clerk will advise you if any documents will be needed and of any other requirements. The Personal Property Section is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and is closed weekends and holidays. Sometimes personal possessions are taken into custody by other law enforcement agencies. You will need to contact those agencies to recover personal possessions in their custody. Clothing is not usually considered property. Unless there is a need to hold clothing as evidence, it is released to the mortuary recovering the deceased. Clothing that presents a health and safety hazard may be disposed of for the safety of all persons involved.

**Q. I NEED TO ENTER MY RELATIVE/FRIENDS RESIDENCE, BUT IT IS SEALED. WHAT CAN I DO?**

**A.** In order to enter you need to obtain permission from the agency listed on the door seal. If the seal indicates Public Administrator (yellow seal) involvement, call (213) 974-0460. If the seal is a Department of Medical Examiner- Coroner's seal (blue seal), call (323) 343-0755.

**Q. WHY IS THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER - CORONER INVOLVED?**

**A.** State law requires the Department of Medical Examiner - Coroner to inquire into and determine the circumstances, manner, and cause of all sudden, violent, or unusual deaths and those deaths where the decedent has not been seen by a physician 20 days prior to death. In such cases the deceased will be taken to the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office and examined by a physician to determine the cause of death. 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. An amendment will later be issued to company the death certificate following completion of special testing.