

	Abilene Police Department Operating Procedures		
	Subject: <i>Death Investigations</i>	Issued: 06/06/2013	TBP:

Death Investigations

All Department police officers shall be familiar with and have working knowledge of Chapter 49, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (Inquest upon Dead Bodies).

Potential Crime Scene Integrity

Emergency medical treatment of obviously deceased persons can be restricted to prevent scene contamination. For purposes of this policy, an obviously deceased person includes one with:

- A. The presence of dependent lividity (clearly defined demarcation where the pooling of blood has occurred after death);
- B. The presence of rigor mortis (stiffening of the muscles after death);
- C. Decapitation;
- D. Decomposition or
- E. Total incineration.

If there is any doubt as to a person's vitality, emergency treatment shall be provided. In order to minimize scene contamination, officers may direct responding medical personnel on their approach to the injured party. This direction should not significantly delay treatment.

Photographs

Photographs shall be taken at all death investigation scenes and booked into evidence.

CID Notification

The Crimes Against Persons Unit should be notified in all cases involving:

- A. Homicide;
- B. All deaths of children under the age of seventeen (17) unless the death is caused by a motor vehicle accident or an overt medical condition diagnosed by a doctor;
- C. All cases where a person is severely injured by the violent act of another person and death appears imminent or
- D. Any other case where death is of a suspicious nature.

Autopsy Required

The Department will request an autopsy for each death of a human being investigated by the Department if the death appears to be a homicide, involves suspicious circumstances or when no reasonable explanation or cause of death can be determined.

CCP Article 49.10 requires an autopsy when the death of a child under the age of six is investigated.



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Identification of Deceased and Next of Kin Notification

In all instances of death investigated by this department, all necessary means of positively identifying the deceased will be accomplished at the scene of the death. The method used to determine the identity will be documented in the case report. It is the responsibility of the investigating officer to notify the deceased's next of kin of the death. If the notification is not made during the initial investigation, all information regarding next of kin should be documented in the report.