

## What Do I Do Next?

Here are a few suggestions to help guide you and your loved ones through this process:

- Involve your family and friends for support and comfort.
- Discuss desired memorial arrangements or funeral services and final disposition (cremation, burial/internment).
- Select a funeral home to help you make arrangements and coordinate final disposition of your loved one's remains. You can call a variety of funeral homes, ask questions and obtain pricing. Any funeral home can assist with cremation.
- Call 316-660-4800 and advise the Coroner's Office/RFSC which funeral home you've selected.
- Once you have chosen a funeral home, the funeral director will have you sign a body release authorization form, which the funeral director will transmit to the Coroner's Office/RFSC on your behalf.
- Upon completion of the examination or autopsy, the funeral director will make arrangements to pick up and transport your loved one's remains to the funeral home.
- Start a file or folder to correlate all paperwork and information that will be shared with you as a result of your loved one's death.

## REGIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER

### Mission Statement

The Forensic Science Center strives to provide the highest quality medicolegal and advanced forensic laboratory services to Sedgwick County.

Death Investigation and Forensic Autopsy services are conducted in a compassionate and objective manner to achieve accurate certification of cause and manner of death.

The Forensic Laboratory services provide unbiased and accurate analytical testing to support the resolution of criminal cases. As an independent agency operating under the Division of Public Safety, the Forensic Science Center collaborates with public health and criminal justice stakeholders to reduce crime and prevent deaths.



## SEDGWICK COUNTY REGIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER

On behalf of the Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center (RFSC), we would like to extend our condolences to you and your family during this difficult time.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide basic information and assist you with the necessary procedures following the death of a loved one.



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## Why is the Coroner involved?

Pursuant to Kansas law, the District Coroner is responsible for investigating deaths within Sedgwick County that:

- result from violence
- are child deaths
- are sudden when in apparent health
- lack a regularly attending physician
- are suspicious or unusual in manner
- occur when in police custody
- are held to be in the public interest
- occur by unlawful means
- are likely the result of suicide

An examination is performed in every case assumed by the Sedgwick County District Coroner, but depending on the circumstances surrounding the death, a full autopsy is not always required.



## Where will my loved one be taken?

In some cases, the decedent may be released to a funeral home after the initial report of death or scene investigation. In other cases, when further examination is necessary, the decedent will be taken to the Regional Forensic Science Center in Wichita, KS.

## Is viewing allowed at the RFSC?

No. The decedent may be viewed at the funeral home once your loved one has been released from the RFSC. Generally, the decedent will be released within 24 to 48 hours; however, some situations do take longer.

## Is it necessary for family to identify the deceased?

No. In most cases, visual identification is obtained by the Medical Investigator at the location of death. In some cases, positive identification may have to be obtained by forensic processes: fingerprints, dental or x-ray comparison, medical implants or devices, DNA, or anthropology.

## What is an autopsy?

An autopsy is an examination of a person's body and/or internal organs after death by a forensic pathologist.

The function of the autopsy is to identify and document the presence or absence of disease and/or injuries for the determination of cause and manner of death.

An autopsy is accompanied by an investigation of the circumstances of death, review of medical history and toxicology testing.

## Will an examination or autopsy prevent a funeral service?

No. These procedures do not prevent the decedent from being viewed or preclude a funeral service.

## Do I have to pay for the autopsy?

No. Examinations and autopsy costs are paid for with public funds.

## Can I get a preliminary report?

No. There are no preliminary reports.

## How do I recover personal effects?

Clothing and personal effects are usually released to the funeral home or crematory with the decedent. However, under certain circumstances, clothing and personal effects may be considered evidence and are released to law enforcement.



## How do I obtain a copy of the autopsy report?

Families can request a certified copy of the final autopsy report by submitting a request to the Clerk of the District Court at 316-660-5900 or [micro@dc18.org](mailto:micro@dc18.org).

## How do I obtain a death certificate?

The death certificate can be obtained from the funeral home, cremation facility, or:

Kansas Department of Health and  
Environment, Office of Vital Statistics  
1-877-305-8315  
[www.kdheks.gov/vital](http://www.kdheks.gov/vital)

A death certificate with a pending cause/manner of death can often be provided by the funeral home while the autopsy report and toxicology testing are still in progress.