

## **What do I do next when a loved one dies?**

- Notify all family members of the loved one's death
- Contact a funeral home of your choosing and make an appointment to meet and discuss with them funeral arrangements for burial or cremation.
- Once you have chosen a funeral home, the funeral director will have legal next of kin sign a Release of Remains, which the funeral director will send to the Coroner's Office.
- Upon completion of the examination or autopsy and the signed Release of Remains, the Coroner's Office will contact the funeral director and authorize the funeral home to take your loved one into their care.

### **Laramie County Coroner**

*Rebecca Reid*

### **Chief Deputy Coroner**

*Char Madden*

### **Deputy Coroners**

*Theresa Patterson*

*Forrestte Brinkerhoff*

*Erin Anderson*

### **Executive Assistant**

*Tina Lacey*

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### **Additional Notes:**

**Laramie County Coroner's Office**  
**3964 Archer Parkway**  
**Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009**  
**Phone: 307-637-8000**  
**Fax: 307-633-4524**  
**Coroner@laramiecounty.com**

**<https://www.laramiecountywy.gov/County-Government/Elected-Officials/County-Coroner>**



**Laramie County Coroner's Office**

### ***Information for the Family***

*On behalf of the Laramie County Coroner's Office, we offer our most sincere condolences to you and your family for the loss of your loved one.*

*It is our hope that this brochure will assist you during the grieving process and help answer questions about the role of the Coroner's Office.*

## **Why is the Coroner's Office involved in the death of my loved one?**

The Coroner's Office is required by State Law (WS 7-4-104) to investigate all deaths that were not anticipated and may involve any of the following: Violent or criminal action; Apparent suicide; Accident; Apparent drug or chemical overdose or toxicity; Unattended death; Apparent child abuse; The deceased is in State custody in any manner; Cause is unknown; Public health hazard; Deceased is unidentified or unclaimed; Infant or Youth Death (Birth to 17). The Coroner's Office has trained investigators who are responsible for determining the Cause and Manner of death, confirm identification of the deceased, and provide notification of next of kin.

## **Is an autopsy needed?**

While this office always tries to accommodate the wishes of a family, sometimes an autopsy is necessary to determine the Cause and Manner of death. In many cases an autopsy will resolve many of the questions a family has about the nature of the event or death. Autopsies are at the discretion of the Coroner depending on the nature of the event or death. The Coroner's Office does not get involved in any civil or legal litigation.

## **Will the coroner's office work with organ donor organizations for anatomical gifts?**

Yes. However, the Coroner's Office has a duty to determine the Cause and Manner of death. Therefore, the Coroner will not release or permit the procurement of any organ that would hamper the Coroner's ability to determine Cause and Manner of death.

## **Where can I get copies of Death Certificates?**

Families should request copies through the local funeral home/registrar that handles the remains. While the Coroner provides information, and certifies the death, our office does not provide the certificates. In the case of past deaths, copies of death certificates should be requested from the Wyoming Department of Health, Vital Statistics (307-777-7591).

## **Why are there two different death certificates?**

Often, further investigation is necessary in determining Cause and Manner of death. The initial Death Certificate may have to be filed with the status of "pending investigation" then the final certificate will be generated after the results are available.

## **What are the costs?**

Any investigation costs, including autopsies, and other services such as transportation of the deceased, consultation on results or the investigation, are all provided by the Coroner's Office at no cost to the involved families. If the Coroner's Office does not deem an autopsy necessary, the family may request a private autopsy at their own expense through a pathologist of their choice.

## **When will we get autopsy results?**

The final written autopsy report is usually available in 90 to 120 days.

## **Are coroner files public record?**

Public records and information are defined as of July 1st, 2011 by State statute. Cases that are under investigation, or in the process of adjudication, are not available as public information by Wyoming and Federal Statutes until those processes are complete. Medical records or other third-party reports obtained by the Coroner's office are not subject to secondary release as restricted by Federal Law. Once a case has been closed and/or completed the judicial process, Coroner dockets are public record by Wyoming Statute. See [Statutes\(PDF, 224](#) as referenced on the "Request for Records" page for details on what is or is not public record. Autopsy reports can only be obtained by the legal next of kin.

## **How do I get copies of records?**

Copies of Coroner Dockets and Autopsy Reports can be requested by filing the proper form, which can be email, mailed, or faxed to our office. The request must be in writing and be completed in full. A photocopy of a valid ID is required. Once the request is received it will be reviewed by the Coroner, our office will contact you with any questions or when the report is available.

## **How do I receive or claim property or personal possessions?**

Any property recovered and held by the Coroner's Office can only be released to the legal next of kin, or their designee by written consent with proper identification and signature.