

OSAC 2022-N-0026 Medicolegal Death Investigation: Terms and Definitions

Medicolegal Death Investigation

Medicine Scientific Area Committee

Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science





Draft OSAC Proposed Standard

OSAC 2022-N-0026 Medicolegal Death Investigation: Terms and Definitions

Prepared by Medicolegal Death Investigation Version: 1.0 February 2022

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Medicolegal Death Investigation:

2	Terms and Definitions
3	Foreword
4 5 6 7 8	The Medicolegal Death Investigation Subcommittee of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees determined that there was variation in the terms and definitions relevant to medicolegal death investigation. This document standardizes the terms and definitions to promote consistency across disciplines and jurisdictions.
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16	Keywords: medicolegal death investigation, coroner, medical examiner
17	
18	
19 20 21 22 23	Abstract: This technical document provides the standardization of terms and definitions used in standards development in the medicolegal death investigation community. The use of standardized terminology in the medicolegal death investigation community promotes consistency across jurisdictions and relieves the judicial system of conflicting terms and definitions.



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25 1 Scope

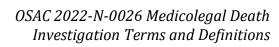
26 2 Normative References

27 3 Terms and Definitions



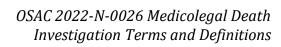


28	Medicolegal Death Investigation: Terms and Definitions
29	1. Scope
30	This technical document provides the standardization of terms and definitions used in standards
31	development in the medicolegal death investigation community. The use of standardized
32	terminology in the medicolegal death investigation community promotes consistency across
33	jurisdictions and relieves the judicial system of conflicting terms and definitions. The list of
34	terms included in this document are fundamental to medicolegal death investigation and
35	associated standards, it is not meant to be exhaustive. Some terms as defined in this document
36	may be used with different meanings in other disciplines.
37	
38	2. Normative References
39	The references used for these terms and definitions can be found in the OSAC Lexicon
40	https://www.nist.gov/osac/osac-lexicon
41	
12	3. Terms and Definitions
43	3.1
14	accreditation
45	Formal recognition by an independent accreditation body that a medicolegal system, office,
46	or agency meets or exceeds a prescribed set of standards
17	
48	3.2
49 - 0	accident (manner)
50	Unexpected or unforeseen death due to injury
51	
52	3.3
53 54	autopsy Disconnection medical proceedures as relating of nectmentam external examination, internal
55	Diagnostic medical procedure consisting of postmortem external examination, internal examination, and other ancillary tests of a decedent; conducted by a pathologist
56	examination, and other alicinary tests of a decedent, conducted by a pathologist
57	3.4
58	biospecimen
59	Any biological specimen derived from a decedent
50	Tiny biological specimen derived from a decedent
51	3.6
62	cause of death
63	Medical opinion of the disease or injury that resulted in a person's death
64	r - J J
65	3.7



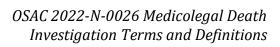


66	certification
67	Procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a person, product, process, or
68	service conforms to specific requirements (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2016)
69	
70	3.8
71	chief medicolegal officer
72	Medical examiner, coroner, justice of the peace or other official who oversees the operation
73	of a medicolegal death investigation office and/or system.
74	
75	3.9
76	certified medicolegal death investigator
77	Medicolegal death investigator who has completed the requirements for Certification
78	(Registry or Board) by an accredited credentialing body, currently American Board of
79	Medicolegal Death Investigators
80	
81	3.10
82	coroner
83	Elected or appointed official whose duty is to oversee medicolegal death investigations,
84	usually for a single county, and ensure certification of cause and manner of death; duties vary
85	based on local enabling statutes
86	
87	3.11
88	could not be determined (manner)
89	(see 3.37 undetermined)
90	
91	3.12
92	death certificate
93	Formal vital statistics document certifying the identification, cause and manner of death of a
94	particular individual
95	
96	3.13
97	death scene
98	Location or site at which a death is pronounced, and at which the decedent's body is
99	located. This may or may not be the same location as the incident scene
100	
101	3.14
102	decedent
103	Deceased person or any suspected human remains
104	



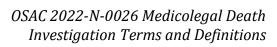


105	3.15
106	external examination
107	Diagnostic medical procedure consisting of physical inspection and ancillary tests of the
108	decedent without internal examination, conducted by a pathologist
109	
110	3.16
111	external evaluation
112	Physical assessment of the decedent by a medicolegal death investigator
113	
114	3.17
115	forensic autopsy
116	Autopsy authorized by law, and typically performed under the jurisdiction of a medical
117	examiner or coroner for criminal justice and public health purposes
118	
119	3.18
120	forensic pathologist
121	Physician who is board-certified in forensic pathology by an accredited credentialing body,
122	currently American Board of Pathology and American Osteopathic Board of Pathology
123	
124	3.19
125	forensic pathology
126	Practice of medicine in which the principles of pathology are applied to problems of potential
127	legal, public health, or public safety significance; a common function is the performance of
128	autopsies to determine the cause and manner of death
129	
130	3.20
131	homicide (manner)
132	Death as a result of a volitional act committed by another person (e.g. injury, poisoning). The
133	classification of homicide does not necessarily indicate that a crime was committed
134	
135	3.21
136	hospital autopsy
137	Autopsy requested by a medical caretaker or healthcare facility, usually authorized by the
138	next-of-kin
139	
140	3.22
141	incident scene
142	Location at which a fatal injury or fatal sequence of events happened. This may or may not
143	be the same location as where the death was pronounced





144	
145	3.23
146	jurisdiction
147	(1) Legal authority to make legal decisions and judgments regarding a death, including
148	performance of autopsy, as well as investigation and certification of cause and manner of
149	death.
150	(2) Geographic area in which a medical examiner or coroner's authority applies
151	
152	3.24
153	manner of death
154	Classification system based on the circumstances under which death occurred; includes
155	accident, homicide, natural, suicide, and undetermined
156	
157	3.25
158	medical examiner
159	Appointed forensic pathologist whose duty is to oversee medicolegal death investigations,
160	perform postmortem examinations, and certify cause and manner of death. In some
161	jurisdictions, individuals with other qualifications hold the title "Medical Examiner", but for
162	purposes of this document those individuals are considered medicolegal death investigators
163	
164	3.26
165	medicolegal death investigation
166	Formal inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of a human being; investigative
167	information is considered with autopsy findings and adjunctive studies (if performed) to
168	determine the cause and manner of death
169	
170	3.27
171	medicolegal death investigation authority
172	Person or persons whose duty it is to perform medicolegal death investigations for a
173	designated jurisdiction, and ensure certification of cause and manner of death; duties vary
174	based on local enabling statutes
175	
176	3.28
177	medicolegal death investigation office
178	Physical location of an agency (usually a medical examiner or coroner office) with the
179	authority to perform medicolegal death investigations
180	
181	3.29
182	medicolegal death investigation system





183	Varied jurisdictional structures used for medicolegal death investigations
184	
185	3.30
186	medicolegal death investigator
187	Individual who has completed the requirements for Certification (Registry or Board) by an
188	accredited credentialing body or performs medicolegal death investigations
189	
190	3.31
191	natural (manner)
192	Death due solely to natural disease
193	
194	3.32
195	next of kin
196	Legally determined hierarchy of interested parties who have authority over the decedent
197	
198	3.33
199	postmortem examination
200	Medical examination of a decedent; this may include autopsy, external examination,
201	evaluation of circumstances, review of medical records and other contextual information
202	
203	3.34
204	private autopsy
205	Autopsy requested and authorized by next-of-kin
206	
207	3.35
208	registry certified medicolegal death investigator
209	Medicolegal death investigator who has completed the requirements for Registry certification
210	by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators or equivalent
211	
212	3.36
213	suicide (manner)
214	Death resulting from intentional/volitional self-inflicted act
215	
216	3.37
217	undetermined (manner)
218	Manner of death used when the information pointing to one manner of death is no more
219	compelling than another
220	