

CHIEF MEDICAL INVESTIGATOR/FORENSIC

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This is a responsible administrative and confidential position in the Medical Examiner's Office in the Health Department. The incumbent is responsible for independent and confidential clinical forensic and death investigations that result from accidental, suicidal, criminal, suspicious or undetermined causes. The incumbent conducts on-scene and in-hospital investigations by interviewing witnesses and recording detailed observations of the scene, obtaining physical and trace evidence, conducting follow-up field investigations and assisting the Chief Medical Examiner in autopsies and toxicological analysis. The incumbent is responsible for supervising support staff in the office and for recommending policies and procedures for the program under the guidance and direction of the Chief Medical Examiner. Evening work and other than normal work schedules can be expected in this position, as the incumbent is on call to cover any emergency, including bioterrorism.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

The following is indicative of the level and types of activities performed by incumbents in this title. It is not meant to be all inclusive and does not preclude a supervisor from assigning activities not listed which could reasonably be expected to be performed by an employee in this title.

1. Investigates death scenes, performing a variety of specialized, technical tasks such as initial body examination, drawing postmortem specimens for analysis and assisting the forensic pathologist with the autopsy;
2. Interviews witnesses to obtain information useful to the Office of the Medical Examiner;
3. Prepares full report on death scenes including recording detailed observations and the taking of forensic photos;
4. Takes official possession of body and arranges for transport to local hospital, funeral home, etc;
5. Recommends release of bodies or the need for autopsies on the basis of preliminary investigations of deaths;
6. Makes field investigations of facts surrounding death including police records, hospital records, committals, mental status, financial problems, events leading to death and facts leading to victim identification;
7. Obtains and or coordinates positive identification of bodies through visual personal identification, affidavit, x-ray, dental records, descriptive evidence, and fingerprint records;
8. Assists forensic pathologist during autopsy in collecting samples, examining evidence, ensuring chain of custody of samples, etc;
9. Maintains all records and documentation on investigations and prepares reports on results in conformance with all medical and legal protocols;
10. Maintains liaison with local, state and federal officials, hospital and hospice staff, funeral directors, the medical community, prison officials, insurance companies, etc;
11. Provides information to next of kin and other family members of the deceased, regarding cause of death, manner and circumstance;
12. May testify in court and serve as expert witness;
13. Recommends policies and procedures for the program under the guidance and direction of the Chief Medical Examiner;
14. Establishes and maintains office procedures to ensure accurate and timely record keeping in conformance with all medical and legal rules and regulations;
15. Supervises subordinate staff in the program;
16. Attends training sessions on changes in law, investigation techniques, criminal forensics, etc. and may instruct others;

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FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND ABILITIES:

Thorough knowledge of modern forensic investigative methods and procedures in order to examine death scenes, determine the need for, plan and conduct further investigation and collect evidence from the scene;

Thorough knowledge of investigative interviewing techniques in order to elicit information from a variety of people, often under very stressful situations;

Good knowledge of pathology, the principles and practices involved in the performance of autopsies and laboratory testing in order to assist during the autopsy and understand the results of autopsy testing in relation to the investigation;

Good knowledge of laws, rules and regulations relating to forensic investigations in order to ensure investigations, data collection and office procedures conform to all governing regulations;

Good knowledge of a variety of software packages for word processing, data collection and spreadsheets;

Ability to observe, record and analyze facts and to prepare thorough, accurate reports based on those facts;

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with physicians, hospital personnel, law enforcement and other governmental agencies, business and community leaders and the general public;

Ability to deal sympathetically and objectively with people under stress;

Ability to remain calm and act effectively in tense and potentially difficult situations;

Personal characteristics necessary to perform the duties of the position;

Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- EITHER: (A) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a Bachelor's degree PLUS two years of field work experience involving professional work of an investigative nature for a public, governmental or not-for-profit agency;
- OR: (B) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or University with an Associate's degree PLUS four years of field work experience involving professional work of an investigative nature for a public, governmental or not-for-profit agency;
- OR: (C) An equivalent combination of training and experience as indicated in (A) and (B) above.

NOTE: Completion of two years (60 credit hours) at a regionally accredited or NYS registered college or university may be substituted for the education requirement in (B) above.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:

Possession of a New York State Driver License at time of appointment.

HL0203

ADOPTED: 01/01/03

REVISED: 01/21/03