

INFORMATION FOR IDENTIFIERS

Identification of the Deceased

1. The death of your relative/friend is reportable to the Coroner under the Coroners Ordinance (Cap. 504). The Police will arrange a next-of-kin or a suitable person (who may be a spouse or same-sex spouse, child, parent, sibling, guardian, friend or consulate of the deceased, or anyone found suitable by the Police and agreed upon by available next-of-kin) to attend the Public Mortuary for identification purpose. Please register at the reception counter of the Public Mortuary with the police officer in charge of the case as arranged. Please bring along the identification document and **any relevant medical records** of the Deceased (e.g. discharge summary from hospitals, letters from attending doctors, etc.).
2. During registration, the Mortuary Officer will request you to complete a form providing the personal particulars of the Deceased for registration purpose. You will also be asked whether the body is to be buried or cremated. If the body is to be exported or if you wish the body to be disposed of by the Government, please inform the Mortuary Officer at the time of registration. After registration, please stay in the waiting lobby to be called for an interview with the Forensic Pathologist.
3. During the interview, the Forensic Pathologist will go through with you the medical history and the circumstances surrounding the death of the Deceased. **If you wish to apply for waiver of the autopsy, you must inform the Forensic Pathologist during the interview.** The decision of whether an autopsy is to be done or not is with the Coroner. In general, the Coroner would not waive the autopsy if the medical cause of death or the circumstances surrounding the death are not clear. For deaths that appeared to be due to natural causes, please provide adequate medical documentation to assist the Forensic Pathologist in giving an opinion on the medical cause of death of the Deceased for the Coroner's consideration. If you want to raise your objection against the Coroner's decision of ordering an autopsy, please contact the Mortuary Officer for arrangement.
4. For case requiring autopsy, please inform the Forensic Pathologist during the interview if you wish to retain the clothing worn by the Deceased; otherwise the clothing will be disposed of after autopsy.
5. For case requiring autopsy, you are entitled to be represented by a registered medical practitioner at the autopsy as an observer. If you so wish, please inform the Forensic Pathologist during the interview.
6. After the interview, you will be required to formally identify the body of the Deceased. A **"Certificate of Collection of Document for Body Disposal"** for later collection of a document for body disposal (see para. 7) and a **"Certificate of Body Collection"** for claiming back of the body of the Deceased will be given to you. Please ensure safe custody of these certificates.

Collection of document for body disposal and other related documents

7. Proper disposal of body requires a **"Certificate of Order Authorizing Burial/Cremation of Body"** which is issued by the Coroner, usually within one to two working days upon case notification. Upon delivery from the Coroner's Court, this document for body disposal is normally available for collection at the designated reception counter of the Public Mortuary in the afternoon of the following working day after 3 p.m. You or another person authorized by you in writing is required to produce the original **"Certificate of Collection of Document for Body Disposal"** issued to you during the formal identification to collect the document for body disposal. The service hours for collection of document for body disposal are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays included).
8. Certified Copy of an Entry in a Register of Deaths (**"Death Certificate"**) is issued by the Births and Deaths General Register Office of the Immigration Department. For deaths reported to the Coroner, this document will only be available after the Coroner has concluded his inquiry of the death. For all matters relating to the issue of this certificate, please enquire directly at the Births and Deaths General Register Office at 3/F, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices. (Tel : 2867 2784) [Note: This document is not required for arranging burial/cremation of the body].
9. If for some special reasons you require a document to certify the fact of death of the Deceased, you may apply to the Coroner's Court for a **"Certificate of the Fact of Death"**. (Address: 9/F, Tower A, West Kowloon Law Courts Building, 501 Tung Chau Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon. Tel : 3916 6204)

10. As stipulated in the Coroners Ordinance, **autopsy reports** prepared by Forensic Pathologists are to be submitted to the Coroner directly. The time taken to complete an autopsy report is dependent on the complexity of the case and the availability of information and analysis/investigation reports provided by other Government departments and organizations. If you wish to obtain a copy of the autopsy report, please apply directly to the Coroner's Court.

Claiming of body

11. For cases not requiring autopsy, the body is ready for collection at the same time of collecting the Certificate of Order Authorizing Burial/Cremation of Body. For cases requiring autopsy, the body can only be collected after the completion of autopsy. Irrespective of whether autopsy is required, if you wish to collect the body earlier, you must inform the Forensic Pathologist during the interview.
12. Prolonged storage of bodies in the Public Mortuary may adversely affect the appearance of the Deceased. Besides, the body storage capacity of the Public Mortuary is limited. You are strongly advised to arrange collection of the body as soon as possible.
13. The service hours for collection of bodies are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays included). You are required to come to the Public Mortuary in person and produce the original "Certificate of Body Collection" issued to you during the formal identification and to sign for collection of the body of the Deceased.

Miscellaneous

14. All services provided by the Public Mortuary are free-of charge. All mortuary staff are Government employees and are prohibited from receiving any benefits in the form of money (including 'lai-see') or gifts. They are not allowed to offer advice on your selection of commercial funeral services. Any person offering benefits to the mortuary staff is liable to prosecution. Should you discover or notice any contravention of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, or encounter claim that money or gifts are required / can be offered in exchange for special treatment, favour or convenience in the Public Mortuary, please report directly to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. (Tel: 2526 6366)
15. Mortuary staff are not allowed to offer you advice regarding settlement of estate. If required, you may contact the Estate Beneficiaries Support Unit of the Home Affairs Department for assistance (Address: 3/F., Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong; Tel: 2835 1535; Website: www.had.gov.hk/estates).
16. The following non-governmental organizations provide bereavement support service to help family cope with issues of loss and grief :-

Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care Tel: 2331 7000 Website: www.hospicecare.org.hk Address: No. 18, A Kung Kok Shan Road, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong (Jockey Club Home for Hospice) Bereavement Support Tel: 2725 7693	The Comfort Care Concern Group Tel: 2361 6606 Website: http://cccg.org.hk Address: 303-305, Podium Floor, Lai Ho House, Lai Kok Est, Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon	TWGHs Chun Tei Kok Buddhist Association Limited Centre of Life Enlightening- "Be-With Service" (Funeral and Bereavement Support) Tel: 2884 2033 Website: http://www.tungwahcsd.org/tc/our-services/elderly-services/specialized-services/ECSCOL/introduction
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17. If you have any enquiries regarding the case, please contact the Mortuary Officer of the respective Public Mortuary. For privacy protection, information about the case will be provided to the registered claimant only, upon request. The office hours are: Mondays - 8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.; Tuesdays to Fridays - 8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (except on public holidays).

Victoria Public Mortuary

Tel : 2817 2026

Fax : 2818 4859

Kwai Chung Public Mortuary

Tel : 2612 5810

Fax : 2419 0709

Fu Shan Public Mortuary

Tel : 2606 9333

Fax : 2691 1112

18. If you have any suggestions/enquiries about the services provided in the Public Mortuary, please contact the Client Relations Officer of the respective Public Mortuary. For further assistance, please contact the Client Relations Officer i/c of the Forensic Pathology Service (Tel: 3661 8347 Fax: 2713 2022 Email: enquiry_fps@dh.gov.hk) or contact the Client Relations Division of the Department of Health by telephone at 2836 0077 or in writing to the Client Relations Division, Department of Health, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

Forensic Pathology Service, Department of Health
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government