

Pennsylvania Law requires the Coroner to investigate and determine the cause and manner of sudden and unexpected deaths where the attending physician is unable to determine the cause of death or the death is a result of a homicide, suicide, accidental or undetermined means. It also includes deaths where the deceased has not been seen by a physician recently prior to death.

If, after the scene investigation, it is determined that further medical evaluation is required, the coroner's office will arrange for transportation of your loved one to a county morgue.

#### **Next Steps for the Next of Kin:**

As soon as possible identify a funeral home of your choosing and immediately notify our office at (610) 344-6165.

Contact the funeral home and inform them that the deceased is being transported by the coroner's office.

The funeral home will then contact the coroner's office and make arrangements to have your loved one taken into their care.

**Chester County Coroner's Office**  
**601 Westtown Road, Suite 090**  
**West Chester, PA 19382**

Office Hours:

Mon-Fri

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

**Phone: (610) 344-6165**

**Fax: (610) 344-6018**

**coroneroffice@chesco.org**

#### **CORONER**

**Christina VandePol, M.D.**

#### **CHIEF DEPUTY CORONER**

**Casey Buckley, D-ABMDI**

#### **Mission Statement**

*The Chester County Coroner's Office is an independent agency serving the citizens and honoring the deceased of the county by investigating the facts and circumstances concerning jurisdictional deaths which have occurred within Chester County. We determine the cause and manner of death, the identity of the decedent, and provide notification to the legal next of kin, while exhibiting the highest degree of compassion, professionalism, and integrity.*



## **SURVIVOR'S GUIDE**



The Chester County Coroner's Office extends its deepest sympathy during this difficult time. The information provided in this brochure is intended to assist survivors with decision making and helpful solutions during this time of loss.

***Coroner Investigator's Name:***

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## Death Certificates

Once the determination is made regarding the cause and manner of death, a death certificate is generated and provided to the responsible funeral home. The original certificate is filed with the Pennsylvania Division of Vital Records by the Funeral Director. Certified copies of this certificate can be obtained from the Funeral Director or the Division of Vital Records.

Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division  
of Vital Records  
Forum Place  
101 South Mercer St.  
New Castle, PA 16101  
(724) 656-3100  
  
www.vitalchek.com

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## Cleaning Services

The following companies specialize in biohazard cleanup. The Chester County Coroner's Office does NOT endorse or recommend any particular company.

Aftermath, Inc.	800-366-9923
ALPHA BioMed	888-656-6228
Bio Tec	888-246-9111
Crime Scene Clean Up	800-295-5460
D.A.S.H.	888-972-0911
Emergiclean	215-742-4221
Radical Restoration	610-775-6535
ServiceMASTER Clean	410-392-4900

## Frequently Asked Questions

### When will I know the cause of death?

*If a cause of death is determined after the medical review and forensic examination, the cause of death is typically available to the next of kin the same day as the autopsy.*

### What does a "pending" case mean?

*You may initially be informed that the Cause and Manner of Death are "pending". Pending simply means that the Cause and Manner are still under investigation. The most common reason for pending is toxicological testing. Usually toxicology results can take 4-6 weeks for completion. The next of kin will be notified of all completed pending cases. For this reason, if you move or change your phone number, please advise our office immediately.*

### How and when can personal property/ possessions be claimed?

*Generally, items to be released can be retrieved from the Coroner's Office Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Please make contact with the Coroner's office at 610-344-6165 for more information.*

### How can I get a copy of an autopsy or toxicology report?

*The next of kin must submit a written request to the coroner's office. Autopsy reports can be obtained for a cost of \$100.00 and toxicology reports for \$50.00*

### Can I see my loved one at the morgue?

*Arrangements for viewing at the morgue cannot be granted. The coroner's office will work as quickly as possible to have your loved one taken into the care of the Funeral Home.*

### Who is considered the next of kin?

*The legal next of kin is the closest living relative in the following order; spouse (unless divorced), adult child, parent, adult brother or sister, adult grandchild.*

## Information, support and guidance are available.

**Center for Loss and Bereavement**  
(610) 222-4110

**Chester County Mental Health  
Crisis Intervention Hotline**  
(610) 280-3270

**Compassionate Friends**  
Provides support to families after a child dies.  
(484) 919-0820

**Crime Victims Center of Chester County**  
(610) 692-1926

**Highmark Caring Place**  
Provides services for children dealing with death & loss.  
(866) 613-4673

**Family Lives On**  
Provides services for children and teens who have lost a parent.  
(610) 458-1690

**"If Love were only Enough"**  
Annalie Korelin 610-952-2992  
Grief support to parents who have lost a child due to a drug overdose.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**PA SIDS Alliance**  
Provides services for the loss of an infant with SIDS  
(888) 721-2742