Frequently Asked Questions

- Why is the Medical Examiner’s Office involved?
  - Article 49.25 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure requires the Medical Examiner to investigate deaths that fall under the following criteria:
    - Unattended deaths
    - Deaths occurring less than 24 hours after admission to a hospital, nursing home, or other institutions
    - Deaths in prison or jail
    - When the cause of death is not known
    - Deaths due to natural causes
    - When death occurred under suspicious circumstances

- Is viewing allowed? No. Please contact the designated funeral home to make arrangements for viewing in their setting.

- Will an autopsy be done?
  - The Medical Examiner will determine whether an autopsy will be performed. In some cases, the Medical Examiner will perform an internal examination and review the medical record. Is there a charge for your services? No.

- What happens to the personal effects of my loved one?
  - If the next-of-kin is present at the time of death, the medical investigator will release the property there. Otherwise, the property is brought to the office, securely stored, and maintained for safe keeping until its release to the next of kin.

How can I find out the cause of death? The cause and manner will be listed on the death certificate. If an autopsy or external exam was done by our office, you can call and request a report. There is a $25.40 fee for non-immediate family members.

When will I get the death certificate? The Medical Examiner will work with the funeral home of your choice to complete a death certificate electronically. The Medical Examiner does not provide copies of death certificates. The signed funeral home will deliver the death certificate with Texas Vital Statistics.

When will the next of kin get the written autopsy report? The vast majority of the cases handled by the Medical Examiner are finalized within 30 business days. Some cases that require specialized workup may take up to 60 business days, or more.