What is my next step?
You should select a funeral home to make final arrangements. The funeral home representative and the Medical Examiner’s Office will coordinate with each other in order to facilitate these arrangements and to eliminate possible delays.

Which deaths must be examined?
The Medical Examiner is required by law to investigate all deaths (1) that occur outside a physician’s care; (2) that are sudden or unexpected; (3) that cannot be ascertained to be a natural death by documented medical history and circumstances. The involvement of the Medical Examiner’s Office (MEO) does not mean that an autopsy will automatically be performed. The MEO may take jurisdiction over an apparently natural death if (1) the death was unexpected and no medical cause can be determined; (2) the decedent was not under the care of a physician, and/or there is no prior documented medical history to explain the death; (3) the death might be a public health hazard; (4) there are extenuating and/or suspicious circumstances associated with the death.

What is an autopsy and is it really necessary?
An autopsy is the examination of the body to determine cause and manner of death. It is similar to a surgical procedure. Often, an autopsy can reveal an undiagnosed disease process or abnormality. It may also detect a genetic disorder that could be inherited by surviving family members. In an accidental death, the question of how a disease process contributed to the accident (if at all) must be answered. Often insurance companies will deny payment of benefits until the autopsy results are available. If the death is due to apparent natural causes and there is sufficient evidence of a pre-existing illness or medical condition, an autopsy may not be necessary. However, if there is any question that the death may be due to “other than natural causes” an autopsy will be performed. In an obviously traumatic death, the cause of death may appear obvious; however there may be contributing, underlying factors. Again, the insurance companies may deny benefits until they receive the autopsy results.

What if I disagree with the MEO’s decision to do or not to do an autopsy?
Colorado law (CRS 30-10-606) provides the authority for the MEO to perform an autopsy as part of an investigation. We use the following guidelines:

1. If the autopsy is deemed unnecessary for the investigation, it will not be performed. By law, an autopsy cannot be performed by the MEO solely for "medical curiosity." If the family or doctor would like a medical curiosity autopsy to be performed, it must be arranged by the family or by the doctor with the family’s permission, and be done by the Pathologist of your choice. You should be aware that the financial responsibility falls upon the requesting party and an autopsy can be quite expensive.
2. If the MEO deems it necessary to perform an autopsy as part of the investigation, the law grants us the ability to take jurisdiction of the body to perform the autopsy. There is no charge for an autopsy conducted under these circumstances.
3. If you or your family should disagree with our decision to perform an autopsy in spite of the benefits and the questions it will answer, you must obtain a Court Order through your attorney to prevent the autopsy from taking place. All legal financial obligations incurred are your responsibility.

Where do I obtain the Death Certificate?
If the MEO is investigating the case and an autopsy is performed, we will issue the Death Certificate. It is given to the funeral home to be filed with State Vital Statistics. The funeral home will issue you as many copies as you request and pay for. Copies may also be obtained from the County or State Dept of Vital Statistics.

When can I view the body?
After the MEO takes jurisdiction of a case, we do not allow viewing of the decedent until the case has been released by the Pathologist. Once released, the body is immediately sent to the funeral home and viewing can then usually take place (Please ask your funeral director, as viewing is not always possible in...
certain cases.) The funeral home has viewing rooms where the family can remain as long as they wish in comfort and privacy.

What about tissue/organ donation?
Approval for release is required by the MEO for tissue/organ donation in deaths that fall under Coroner Statutes. Only heart valves, skin, long bones, and corneas can be donated after death. Persons on life support may be eligible for organ donation. Donation will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOU

LARIMER COUNTY MORTUARIES

Fort Collins:
- Allnutt Funeral Service 970-482-3208
- Bohlender Funeral Chapel 970-482-4244
- Goes Funeral Care 970-482-2221
- Resthaven Funeral Service 970-667-0202
- Vessey Funeral Services 970-482-5065

Loveland:
- Allnutt Funeral Service 970-667-1121
- Kibbey-Fishburn Funeral Home 970-667-5885
- Viegut Funeral Home 970-679-4669

Estes Park:
- Allnutt Funeral Service 970-586-3101

CLEANING SERVICES

212 Degrees Restoration 970-231-0120
Aftermath 800-366-9923
BioClean of Colorado 970-686-5015
Bio-One 970-818-1099
Blu Sky Restoration 970-416-0600
Colorado Crime Scene Cleaners 303-777-0190
Steri-Clean Colorado 888-577-7209

GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Touchstone Health Partners 970-494-4200
Pathways Hospice 970-663-3500
Alliance for Suicide Prevention 970-482-2209
Center for Loss and Life Transition 970-226-6050
CSP Victim’s Advocates 970-506-4986
Larimer County Victim’s Advocates 970-498-5149

BODY DONATION

Donor Alliance 303-360-6000
Rocky Mtn. Lions Eye Bank 720-848-3959
Univ of Colo State Anatomical 303-724-2410
Science Care 800-417-3747
Life Legacy 888-774-4438
MedCure 866-560-2525
Tomorrow Link 720-779-8677