

MONO COUNTY SHERIFF

A Commitment to Community Safety and Service



Ingrid Braun
Sheriff-Coroner

MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Phillip West
Undersheriff

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the Coroner involved in the death of my loved one?

State Law (Government Code 27491) requires the Coroner to investigate all unnatural deaths where the attending Medical Director is unable to state a cause of death as well as cases where the deceased has not been seen by a doctor for 20-days prior to death. Our responsibilities are to establish positive identity of the deceased; cause and classification of death; determine the place, date, and time; take charge of any property found upon the body; and notify next of kin. The Coroner's investigation is not limited to the examination of the deceased but may include interviews with family members and other witnesses along with the collection of physical evidence at the death scene.

What type of personal information will the Coroner need about my loved one?

The Coroner will need vital information from you, as soon as possible, to comply with state law.

Where is my loved one being taken?

Your loved one will be transported to:

Brune Mortuary
325 West Elm Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(760) 873-4266

If there is any type of Coroner investigation, your loved one will be released as soon as possible.

What do I do now?

Contact the Brune Mortuary soon as possible. They are prepared to assist you in making your selection and decisions. They will work closely with us to arrange the release of your loved one's remains from their facility. They will also guide you in deciding how many certified copies of the death certificate you will need and order them for you when they file their paperwork with the county.

Do I have to utilize Brune Mortuary's services?

No. The Mono County Sheriff/Coroner Office does not have a morgue facility such as other larger agencies and is contracted with the Brune Mortuary for their morgue services. Contact Brune Mortuary and they can assist you in making arrangements for your loved one to be transported to another mortuary.

Is an autopsy needed?

Autopsies are not always necessary with every death investigation by the Coroner. Autopsies are performed only on those cases where it is required by law or where it is necessary to determine the cause of death.

Are there any Coroner fees?

All costs associated with the Coroner's investigation and/or autopsy are covered by the county and not charged to the estate or the family members.

When can I have the funeral?

The Coroner investigation will be completed as soon as possible and should not delay your funeral plans.

Can I find out the cause of death?

Yes, in the majority of cases you can be told the cause of death within several days. Occasionally to determine the cause of death, further studies such as microscopic and toxicological tests must be performed. In these instances, a "pending" death certificate is filed with the county so that funeral services can be completed without delay. When these further studies have been completed, an amended death certificate is issued. "Pending" death certificates can be obtained through the county; however, some financial, estate, probate, or business matters may be dependent upon the final death certificate.

How do I get copies of Coroner records?

A copy of the coroner report can be obtained by contacting Sarah Roberts at the Mono County Sheriff's Department at (760) 932-5279 or sroberts@monosheriff.org. There could be a small charge for this service.

How do I contact the Coroner in charge of my loved one's case?

You can contact Chief Deputy Coroner, Lt. Phillip West, Monday – Friday, 8a.m. to 4p.m. and he can identify the specific Deputy Coroner that is handling the case.

How do I reclaim property taken by the Coroner?

The Coroner may release property directly to the legal next of kin or any other person furnishing written authorization from the legal next of kin. Property often is released with the remains to the mortuary personnel. All prescription medications in the name of the deceased will be retained by the Coroner and will be destroyed pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 11175 and 11377 (unlawful to possess), along with Business and Professions Code Section 4060.

Is a Coroner's investigation a public record?

Yes, with some exceptions. Coroner photographs, medical and psychological records, and information about ongoing criminal investigations are not released except upon receipt of a valid court order.