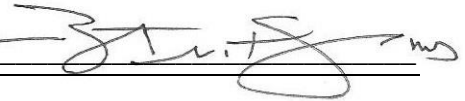


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TITLE: CHILD DEATH INVESTIGATION

Policy: All deaths reported to the District of Columbia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) shall be thoroughly investigated to determine jurisdiction, and, for those deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of OCME, to aid in the certification of the cause and manner of death, pursuant to DC Code § 5-1403 and 1409. Death investigation in the DC OCME is modeled on the National Guidelines for Death Investigation. Documentation is in OCME's automated case management system: Forensic Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS).

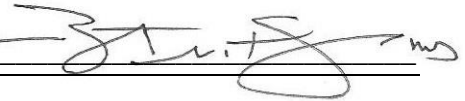
Purpose: To provide guidelines for conducting child death investigations in a safe, professional, and thorough manner. Cases that are deemed Medical Examiner cases and require investigations are defined in accordance with District of Columbia Official Code §5-1405.

Scope: The following procedures are to assist the Medicolegal Investigator/Forensic Investigator (MLI/FI) to perform child death investigations in a complete manner in a safe and secure environment.

1. General

- 1.1. See *Section 6B: Investigations*
- 1.2. When an infant dies suddenly and/or unexpectedly, a complete death scene investigation is necessary to determine the cause and manner of death.
- 1.3. Deaths of infants less than two (2) years old, at a hospital requires scene investigations:
 - a. Investigate first at the hospital
 - b. Investigate at the location of the incident/death. (i.e. residence or location in which the infant was found).
- 1.4. Special circumstances may exist in which a scene investigation should be performed on children over two (2) years of age.
- 1.5. Possible reasons for scene investigation include but are not limited to:
 - 1.5.1. Deaths as a result of possible abuse or other violence.
 - 1.5.2. Deaths in custody of local, county, state, or federal institutions.
- 1.6. When appropriate, the goal of a doll reenactment is to be able to accurately depict the sleep environment into which the infant was placed and found.

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- 1.7. Child/infant deaths are investigated in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation Guidelines.
 - 1.8. The MLI is to report to the hospital, if child has been transported for medical intervention, to examine the decedent as well as to the site from where the decedent was transported (if inside the District's jurisdiction) for a retrospective scene investigation. This is to be in conjunction with a member of the Metropolitan Police Department/Special Victims Unit.
 - 1.9. Interviewing of the placer and finder of the decedent is to be done separately if more than one individual is involved.
 - 1.10. In the event that an MLI is not available, the FI on duty is to contact the on-call medical examiner for further guidance and for jurisdictional decisions. All demographic information is to be gathered from the reporting entity and an OCME case number assigned.
 - 1.10.1. The FI shall report to the involved hospital in the company of an MPD/SVU detective to photograph decedent and to gather available information and records.
 - 1.10.2. The FI will not conduct doll re-enactment if required. This will be endorsed to the MLI coming on duty.
 - 1.11. The DFI is to be notified via email of any infant deaths

2. Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigations (SUIDI)

- 2.1. The following protocol shall serve as a guideline in conducting infant/child death scene investigations.
 - 2.1.1. Photographically document the body at the hospital
 - 2.1.2. Doll re-enactment
 - 2.1.2.1. Always explain the investigation process to the family prior to leaving the hospital. Explain to the family member or caregiver who will be participating in the reenactment how the reenactment process works and its importance.
 - 2.1.2.2. Photographically document the *placed* position utilizing the *Placed* placards.
 - 2.1.2.3. Photographically document the *found* position utilizing the *Found* placards.
 - 2.1.3. Photograph the layers of the bedding without the doll in the image.
- 2.2. The investigation shall be documented using the SUIDI form.