

TITLE: IDENTIFICATION METHODS AND CONFIRMATION

Policy: The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is responsible for the positive identification of all decedents whose deaths are investigated pursuant to DC Code § 5-1403 and 1409.

Purpose: To ensure efficient and timely identification of decedents under the jurisdiction of OCME.

Scope: The following procedure is to assist the ID Unit and any OCME staff member involved in the identifications of a decedent.

1. Identification

1.1. Prior to positive identification, each case is listed in Forensic Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS) as Unidentified or with a tentative name.

1.1.1. A tentative name is listed in parentheses: (first name), (last name).

1.1.2. Unidentified decedents are listed with the first name **Unidentified** and last name **Unidentified**. Additional information such as demographics may be listed as the middle name. Failure to list the first and last name as **Unidentified** restricts search capabilities within FACTS.

1.2. Visual identification is the preferred method of identification when the decedent is viewable and a close family member or friend is available. When a visual identification is not possible, the decedent is identified by alternate methods.

1.3. Acceptable alternate methods of identification, listed in order of priority, are:

1.3.1. Fingerprints

1.3.2. Radiograph comparison, dental or skeletal

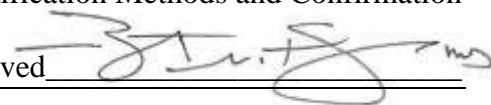
1.3.2.1. Odontology examination is performed or consultation sought in all OCME cases of skeletal remains and when necessary for identification.

1.3.2.2. Anthropological examination/evaluation is performed or consultation sought in all OCME cases of skeletal remains.

1.3.3. DNA comparison

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Approved

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1.4. When the above methods of positive identification are unsuccessful, circumstantial identification is pursued.

2. Identification Confirmation

2.1 Prior to release of a decedent, the case pathologist reviews the identification process.

2.2 The pathologist initials and dates the paperwork generated during the identification process indicating he/she has reviewed and agrees with the identification

2.2.1 Visual Identification – Decedent Identification form

2.2.2 Finger Prints – Finger print comparison report

2.2.3 Radiograph Comparison – Supplemental report or Anthropology report

2.2.4 DNA – Laboratory report

2.2.5 Circumstantial ID – Supplemental report

2.3 Pathologists typically review the identification forms at the time of e-signing the death certificate.