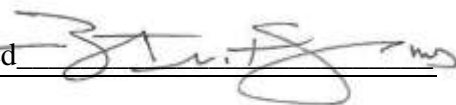


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TITLE: VISUAL IDENTIFICATION

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. Visual Identification

1.1. Visual identification may occur at the scene or at OCME.

1.1.1. At the scene, the Investigator decides if the decedent is viewable and confirms that the family member or friend has seen the decedent.

1.1.1.1. The family member or friend completes the Identification Form.

1.1.1.2. The Investigator photographs the individual's governmental issued photo identification.

1.1.2. At the OCME, the case Medical Examiner decides if a decedent is appropriate for visual identification.

1.2. Visual Identification at OCME – by photograph only; there is no viewing of decedents at the OCME

1.2.1. Preparing the photograph

1.2.1.1. The photography staff generates a photograph (ID Photo) for the purpose of showing the family.

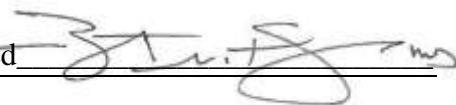
1.2.1.1.1. When the decedent is in an early state of decomposition, a black and white photograph may be taken and an Investigator and/or Medical Examiner will decide if it is appropriate for viewing.

1.2.1.2. The ID Photo is placed in the Documentation Room for the ID Unit staff.

1.2.1.3. The ID Unit staff retrieves the photograph and places it within an envelope in the case chart.

1.2.1.4. The ID Unit staff calls the family to schedule a visual identification. The staff member instructs the family member to bring governmental issued photo identification (ID).

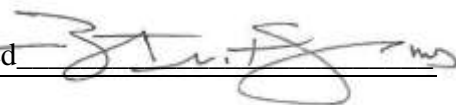
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- 1.2.1.4.1. The ID Unit staff must inform the family that Visual Identification will occur by the viewing of a photo and the actual physical body will not be viewed.
 - 1.2.1.4.2. The phone call is documented in the Comment section of the Identification page within FACTS. The following is included in the comment:
 - 1.2.1.4.2.1. Staff's initials;
 - 1.2.1.4.2.2. Date and time of the call;
 - 1.2.1.4.2.3. Who was reached, or if family was unreachable;
 - 1.2.1.4.2.4. Any other relevant information, i.e., when the family plans to arrive.
 - 1.2.2. When the family arrives, the ID Unit staff receives the ID from the individual viewing the ID Photo (Viewer) and completing the identification paperwork.
 - 1.2.3. ID Unit staff copies the ID and returns it to the Viewer.
 - 1.2.4. ID Unit staff documents on the copy of the ID the following:
 - 1.2.4.1. the case number;
 - 1.2.4.2. date and time the Viewer arrived;
 - 1.2.4.3. relationship of the Viewer to the decedent; and
 - 1.2.4.4. the staff member's initials.
 - 1.2.5. ID Unit staff prepares the Decedent Survivor Form. The form is located on the P: drive (P:\Communication forms\Communication forms)
 - 1.2.5.1. ID Unit staff writes the case number on the form
 - 1.2.6. ID Unit staff forwards the prepared Decedent Survivor Form to the Recover staff. (In absence of Recover staff, ID Unit Staff completes the following steps.)
 - 1.2.6.1. The Recover staff meets with the family and explains the identification process.
 - 1.2.6.2. The family completes the Decedent Survivor Form.
 - 1.2.6.3. Recover staff passes the completed form back to the ID Unit staff.
 - 1.2.6.4. The ID Unit staff documents the following information on the form:
 - 1.2.6.5. Marks "ID Confirmed Via Photo at OCME"
 - 1.2.6.6. Signs the Witness line and documents the date and time of the identification.
 - 1.2.6.7. Using the information written on the Decedent Survivor Form by the Viewer, the ID Unit staff enters the following information into the Identification page within FACTS:
 - 1.2.6.7.1. Method – (ID at OCME);
 - 1.2.6.7.2. Date and time of the identification - (mm/dd/yyyy 00:00);

Section 11: Decedent Identification
B: Visual Identification

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- 1.2.6.7.3. NOK Form Signed? - (Yes or No);
 - 1.2.6.7.4. Grief Counseling Provided? - (Yes or No);
 - 1.2.6.7.5. Identified By – (Name of Viewer);
 - 1.2.6.7.6. Relationship – (Relationship of Viewer to the decedent);
 - 1.2.6.7.7. Address – (Address of Viewer);
 - 1.2.6.7.8. Phone – (Phone number of Viewer);
 - 1.2.6.8. Acceptable Form of Identification – (type of ID provided by Viewer);
 - 1.2.6.8.1. ID number – (Number printed on Viewer’s ID).

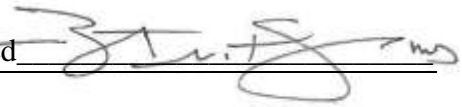
 - 2.2.9. The ID Unit staff enters all the provided survivor contact information into the Decedent Survivor Page within FACTS. Staff enters the information into the “List of Decedent Survivors” section of the page and not the “Primary Decedent Survivor” or “Initial Contact Person Information”. **Only Investigations enters information into the “Primary Decedent Survivor” or “Initial Contact Person Information”.**

 - 2.2.10. The ID Unit staff saves the information within FACTS and prints the Identification Form.

 - 2.2.11. The ID Unit staff presents the ID Photo faced down to the Viewer.
 - 2.2.12. After viewing the ID Photo, the Viewer prints the decedent’s name and signs the back of the ID Photo and completes the Identification form.
 - 2.2.13. The ID Unit staff finalizes the Identification form by signing the Witness line and documenting the date and time of the identification.
 - 2.2.14. The ID Unit staff finalizes the identification in FACTS.
 - 2.2.14.1. Updates the decedent’s name within FACTS, remove () and ensure the spelling of the name matches the name written by the Viewer on the Identification Form.
 - 2.2.14.2. Confirms the decedent’s date of birth, address, social security number is correct.
 - 2.2.14.2.1. If the social security number is unavailable, 999-99-9999 is entered.

 - 2.2.15. The ID Unit staff places all completed forms in the case chart.
- 2.2 Additional Viewing of the ID Photo
- 1.1.1. Once the identification of the decedent is confirmed, the ID Photo is not shown to additional family members or friends of the decedent.

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- 1.1.2. One exception is when the legal NOK did not visually identify the decedent and request to perform a visual identification prior to release of the decedent.

3. Waiving Visual Identification Requirements

- 3.1. The visual identification requirement is waived when a case is a medical record review and the decedent is not brought to the OCME for an examination.
- 3.2. The visual identification requirement is waived when a decedent died in the hospital and family was present during the terminal admission.
- 3.2.1. By phone, Investigations staff confirms that family was present during the final hospital admission and confirms the proper spelling of the decedent's name and correct birth date.
- 3.2.2. Investigations staff documents the information in the Supplemental Report.
- 3.2.3. Investigations staff enters the following information into the Identification page of FACTS:
- 3.2.3.1. Check the "ID Waived/Not Required?" box;
 - 3.2.3.2. Method – (ID Waived);
 - 3.2.3.3. Date & Time – (MM/DD/YYYY 00:00);
 - 3.2.3.4. NOK Form Signed? – (Not Applicable); and
 - 3.2.3.5. Grief Counseling Provided? – (No).