

Policy: The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is assured adequate supporting services, equipment and facilities to perform death investigations and autopsy examinations pursuant to DC Code § 5-1403 and 1409.

Purpose: To ensure efficiency and accuracy in reporting measurements for death investigations and case examination in accordance with the mission of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Scope: The following procedures are to ensure that the Investigations Staff, Mortuary Staff, and the Medical Examiner physicians have the proper forensic calibration guidance for equipment and instruments to support consistent data collection.

Definitions and Abbreviations:

NIST- National Institute of Standards and Technology is a measurements standards laboratory.

OCME- The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

SOP- Standard Operating Procedures

1. Equipment and Instruments:

1.1. An integral aspect of death investigations is to obtain efficient and accurate measurements using calibrated instruments and equipment. The OCME utilizes the equipment to obtain measurements that are documented in the investigation and examination reports such as, but not limited to:

1.1.1. Digital Crane Hanging Organ Scales; and

1.1.2. Digital Floor Scales

2. Service Vendors:

2.1. Specific equipment, such as the Digital Crane Hanging Organ scale and Digital Floor scale, may require that certified service vendors complete the calibration service on OCME instruments and equipment.

2.1.1. Upon arrival at OCME, the service vendor representatives shall sign into the OCME on the 5th floor prior to entering the area and after departing the area designated for the calibration service.

2.1.2. The service vendor representatives shall be under escort by OCME staff at all times during the service.

3. Digital Scale Calibration:

- 3.1. The Digital Crane Hanging Organ scales and the Digital Floor scale are used daily. The Digital Crane Hanging Organ scale is used to obtain the weight for organs grossly reviewed during autopsy examination. The Digital Floor scale is used to obtain the decedent's body weight during the decedent intake process.
 - 3.1.1. Digital Crane Hanging Organ scales are located at each autopsy grossing station. The Digital Floor scale is located in the Documentation Room.
 - 3.1.2. The Digital Crane Hanging Organ scales and Digital Floor scale are initially calibrated at the time of installation or prior to delivery by the service vendor. The Digital Crane Hanging organ scales and Digital Floor scale shall be calibrated bi-annually, every 6 months after installation or delivery by a certified service vendor using NIST Traceable Certified Test Weights.
 - 3.1.2.1. The Mortuary Unit Supervisor or designee contacts the service vendor to schedule an appointment for the Digital Crane Hanging Organ scale and Digital Floor scale calibration service.
 - 3.1.2.1.1. Prior to the calibration service, the Digital Crane Hanging Organ pans and digital scale tuners shall be disinfected by the Mortuary Unit staff using sterilizing solutions (e.g. Sporicidin).
 - 3.1.2.2. The calibration measurements are recorded by the service vendor representatives. The date of calibration service is documented and affixed to the digital tuners of the Crane Hanging and Floor scales by the service vendor representatives.
 - 3.1.2.2.1. Service Reports and Calibration Certificates of the calibration and measurement of uncertainty are provided by the service vendor representatives and shall be retained in the Mortuary Unit in accordance with the Records Retention SOP.
 - 3.1.2.2.1.1. The Mortuary Unit Supervisor or designee shall review the calibration results with the service vendor representative immediately following the calibration service to determine if each scale is within the acceptable range.
 - 3.1.2.2.1.2. If calibration measurements are not within acceptable ranges; the Mortuary Unit Supervisor or designee shall contact the service vendor representative for corrective action, repair, or replacement of the scales.