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

Purpose: To ensure proper post-mortem examination procedures in accordance with the mission of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Scope: The following procedures are to assist Medical Examiner physicians to perform proper post-mortem examinations in a safe and secure environment.

1. HISTOLOGY

1.1. Histology services are performed in-house.

1.2. Histologic examination is guided by the medical examiner’s discretion.

1.3. Histologic specimens must be obtained for every internal postmortem examination performed, unless precluded by condition or absence of the organ.

1.3.1. Tissue will be placed in cassette at the time of the autopsy by the medical examiner.

1.3.1.1. Cassette will be labeled with case number and “A” followed by sequential numbers (non brain tissue) and “B” (brain tissue) followed by sequential numbers.

1.4. Standard tissue sections include heart, lungs, liver, kidney and brain (hippocampus and/or frontal).

1.4.1. Additional sections may be submitted when deemed necessary by the medical examiner.

1.5. All cases do not require the preparation of slide preparation.

1.5.1. Those cases that do not require slide preparation can be indicated on the requisition form as “embedded only”.

1.6. Cases which require H & E glass slide preparation include:

1.6.1. Infant and children deaths.

1.6.1.1. Cases of suspected SUID should have extensive histologic sampling from all organs.

1.6.1.2. In case of child abuse, the documentation of injuries by histology is highly recommended.
1.6.2. Cases in which no cause of death is determined during the gross examination
1.6.3. Cases in which tissue diagnosis is necessary

1.7. Specialized stains of tissue sections may be obtained by the medical examiner when necessary to further document microscopic findings, including microorganisms, iron, fat, and connective tissue.
   1.7.1. Appropriate control slides must be returned with special stains.

1.8. The medical examiner must review all glass slides generated for a case and include a description of the microscopic findings in the Autopsy Report.
   1.8.1. The medical examiner musts list the sections and corresponding blocks in the Autopsy Report

1.9. When the medical examiner deems other sections necessary, additional numbered cassettes are prepared.
   1.9.1. The medical examiner will document the anatomic site from which the additional tissue was obtained and list on the Autopsy Report.