

- 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. Microbiology**

- 1.1. All cultures for bacterial, viral or fungal organisms are sent out to DC Public Health Laboratory.
- 1.1.1. Microbiology/specimen handling forms (available in each autopsy suite) are filled out for each specimen itemizing the specimens sent and test requested.
- 1.2. Microbiology testing is at the discretion of the attending pathologist
- 1.2.1. Microbiology testing must be performed on all Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths

## **2. Specimen collection**

- 2.1. Blood
- 2.1.1. Blood is the most common specimen cultured and should be obtained immediately following removal of the chest plate and before there is any manipulation of the bowel
- 2.1.2. Cerebral Spinal
- 2.1.2.0. Cerebral spinal fluid may be obtained by needle puncture into the lumbar spinal canal or into the basal cistern at the base of the skull.
- 2.1.3. Tissue
- 2.1.3.0. The lungs are the most common site for tissue cultures. Tissues are to be collected as aseptically as possible utilizing fresh sterile scalpel blades.
- 2.1.4. Viral Testing
- 2.1.4.0. Nasopharyngeal sampling using a sterile swab kit is used for viral testing.

**3. DC Public Health Laboratory**

- 3.1. DC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) has a defined list of diseases and conditions that must be reported.
- 3.2. PHL can supply the appropriate collection technique, and sampling handling requirements. Any questions regarding the above should be directed to PHL.