

- 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. General**

- 1.1. Toxicology specimen **MUST BE TAKEN** on all case types if possible, even if no toxicological tests are ordered
- 1.2. Toxicology specimens include blood, urine, liver, vitreous humor, stomach contents, brain and bile.
  - 1.2.1. Vitreous humor should not be submitted in pediatric cases if the eyes are preserved for evaluation of retinal hemorrhages.
- 1.3. Additional/alternative specimens may include muscle, spleen and kidney.

## **2. Testing guidelines per case type**

- 2.1. Cases requiring a complete toxicological analysis include
  - 2.1.1. Homicides
  - 2.1.2. Child and elder abuse
  - 2.1.3. Suspected drug related death
  - 2.1.4. Infant and children deaths (except motor vehicle crash victims)
  - 2.1.5. Deaths in custody for which there is no underlying lethal natural disease
  - 2.1.6. Drivers in motor vehicle crashes and any pedestrians
  - 2.1.7. Persons with natural disease in which ethanol and/or drugs of abuse may have contributed to the death
  - 2.1.8. Drowning
  - 2.1.9. Fire deaths