

- Policy:** The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) attempts to positively identify all decedents whose deaths are under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner.
- Purpose:** To increase the visibility of unidentified decedent by publishing their physical descriptions through services available to the public and submitting DNA profiles to national databases.
- Scope:** This standard operating procedure is followed when an individual remains unidentified after completing the procedure outlined in IDU1.001. The following procedure shall be completed prior to an unidentified decedent being released for Public Disposition or to a skeletal repository.
- Definition:** Unidentified decedent – individual with no tentative name and a negative fingerprint search.
- Unidentified Decedent Flier (UDF) – single page flier detailing a decedent’s physical description and information that may assist in positively identifying the decedent including photographs of the face, scars/marks/tattoos, and/or personal property.
- Organization and Management:** The ID Unit is responsible for completing the following procedure.

## **1. Processing Unidentified Decedent Cases**

- 1.1. Create an Unidentified Decedent Flier (UDF)
  - 1.1.1. Use the UDF template <I:\Unidentified Decedents\UDF Template.docx>.
  - 1.1.2. Submit a hard copy of the UDF to Records Management.
  - 1.1.3. Save an electronic copy of the UDF in a subfolder labeled with the case number in <I:\Unidentified Decedents>.
  - 1.1.4. Release the UDF to the law enforcement.
- 1.2. Take comparison quality radiographs (skeletal and dental)
- 1.3. Chart dentition
- 1.4. Enter the case in NamUs
  - 1.4.1. Upload the following into NamUs.
    - 1.4.1.1. ID photo
    - 1.4.1.2. Fingerprint card scan
    - 1.4.1.3. Dental radiographs
    - 1.4.1.4. Images of the decedent’s clothing

- 1.4.1.5. Images of tattoos
- 1.4.1.6. Images of property that may help identify the decedent
- 1.4.2. Print and submit a copy of the NamUs report to Records Management.
- 1.5. Open a case file with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) (**1-800-THE-LOST**) when the decedent appears to be under the age of 20 years.
  - 1.5.1. The ID Unit supervisor records the NCMEC case number in the running report within FACTS.
- 1.6. Submit a DNA sample to a CODIS laboratory accepting unidentified decedent samples.
- 2. **Positive Identification**
  - 2.1. When an unidentified decedent is positively identified, the following individuals are notified:
    - 2.1.1. ID Unit Supervisor
    - 2.1.2. Medical examiner assigned to the case or the Chief Medical Examiner if the medical examiner is no longer employed by OCME.
    - 2.1.3. The investigating law enforcement agency
      - 2.1.3.1. A Next-of-Kin search is requested of the investigating agency
    - 2.1.4. Records Management to process any amendment to the death certificate

**DOCUMENT HISTORY**

Date	Version	Description of Activity or Revision	Approved By
February 2017	0	New Document	RAM