

641—127.1(144,331,691) Definitions.

“Autopsy” means the external and internal postmortem examination of a deceased person.

“Cause of death” means the disease or injury which sets in motion the chain of events which eventually result in the death of a person. The physician shall consider “but for” this injury or disease the person would still be living.

“County medical examiner” or “CME” means a medical or osteopathic physician or surgeon licensed in the state of Iowa and appointed by the board of supervisors to serve in this capacity.

“County medical examiner investigator” or “CME-I” means an individual appointed by a county medical examiner, with approval by the board of supervisors and the state medical examiner, to serve under the supervision of a county medical examiner to assist in death investigations.

“County of appointment” means the county which requests a medical examiner to conduct an investigation, perform or order an autopsy, or prepare a report(s) in a death investigation case. The request may be authorized by the county attorney or the county medical examiner. The county of appointment shall be the county in which the death occurred.

“Cremation” means the technical process, using heat and flame, that reduces human remains to bone fragments.

“Day” means calendar day.

“Death” means the condition as described in Iowa Code section 702.8.

“Death affecting the public interest” means any death of a human being in which the circumstances are sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious, or unattended, including but not limited to those deaths listed at Iowa Code section 331.802(3) and described as follows:

1. Violent death. Violent death includes homicide, suicide, or accidental death resulting from physical, mechanical, thermal, chemical, electrical, or radiation injury. A medical examiner’s investigation and report are required irrespective of the period of survival following injury.

2. Death caused by criminal abortion, including self-induced.

3. Death related to disease thought to be virulent or contagious which may constitute a public hazard. Any such case investigated by a medical examiner shall be reported to the department and to the local health authority.

4. Death that has occurred unexpectedly or from an unexplained cause. This term includes the following situations:

- Death without prior medical conditions accounting for the death.
- Apparently instantaneous death without obvious cause.
- Death during or following an unexplained syncope or coma.
- Death during an unexplained, acute, or rapidly fatal illness.

5. Death of a person confined in a prison, jail, or correctional institution.

6. Death of a person when unattended by a physician during the period of 36 hours immediately preceding death.

- This term includes the following situations:

— Persons found dead without obvious or probable cause.

— Death when the person was unattended by a physician during a terminal illness.

— Fetal death unattended by a physician. A fetal death is a fetus born dead after a gestation period of 20 completed weeks or greater or a fetus which weighs 350 grams or more (Iowa Code section 144.29).

- This term does not include a prediagnosed terminal or bedfast case in which a physician has been in attendance within 30 days preceding the death.

- This term does not include a terminally ill patient who was admitted to and received services from a hospice program as defined in Iowa Code section 135J.1, if a physician or registered nurse employed by the program was in attendance within 30 days preceding the death.

7. Death of a person if the body is not claimed by a relative or friend.

8. Death of a person if the identity of the deceased is unknown.

9. Death of a child under the age of two years if death results from an unknown cause or if the circumstances surrounding the death indicate that sudden infant death syndrome may be the cause of death.

“Department” means the Iowa department of public health.

“Deputy county medical examiner” or *“DCME”* means an individual appointed by a county medical examiner, with approval by the board of supervisors and the state medical examiner, to assist the county medical examiner in the performance of the county medical examiner’s duties.

“External examination” means a close inspection of the exterior of a deceased human body for the purpose of locating, describing, and delineating any and all injuries or other abnormalities. External examination of a body does not constitute an autopsy, even if toxicology samples are obtained.

“Fee” means an amount to be paid to a county medical examiner’s office as determined by the board of supervisors of the county of appointment for completion of an investigation, autopsy, or report(s). Fees for services provided by the state medical examiner’s office are established at 641—126.3(691).

“Form ME-1” means the Preliminary Report of Investigation by Medical Examiner form.

“Form ME-2” means the Medical Examiner Embalming Certificate form.

“Form ME-3” means the Permit by Medical Examiner for Autopsy form.

“Form ME-4” means the Preliminary Report of Child/Infant Death Scene Investigation form.

“Form ME-5” means the Cremation Permit by Medical Examiner form.

“Form ME-6” means the Iowa State Medical Examiner’s Office Personal Effects form.

“Form ME-7” means the Medication List form.

“Form ME-8” means the Body Identification Record form.

“Manner of death” means the circumstances under which the cause of death occurred and may be specified as follows: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, undetermined, or pending.

“Medical care provider” means an individual licensed or certified in any medical profession, including but not limited to a physician, physician assistant, nurse, emergency medical care provider, certified nurse’s aide, pharmacist, physical therapist, and medical technologist.

“Medical examiner” means the state medical examiner, deputy state medical examiner, county medical examiner, or deputy county medical examiner.