Frequently Asked Coroner Questions

1. Does every coroner’s case require an autopsy?
   1. No, every investigation is different. The coroner has to conduct an inquiry sufficient to determine cause, manner, and circumstance of death. The most common methods of inquiry are:
      1. Discussion with decedent’s primary care physician
      2. A review of the decedent’s medical history
      3. Medical file review accompanied by an external examination by the medical examiner.
      4. Medical file review, external exam, and toxicology screening.
      5. Autopsy

The coroner’s office will utilize the least intrusive means necessary to assist in determining the cause of death while assuring the most accurate cause of death is determined.

1. How long does it take to determine cause of death
   1. It completely depends on the circumstances of the death and what method of inquiry is chosen. Results can vary between 4 weeks and 4 months.
2. How do I retrieve my loved one’s belongings?
   1. In the case of a death under the jurisdiction of the Coroner, family members need to contact the Lassen County Sheriff-Coroner's Office for instructions.
3. There is a Coroner Seal on my loved one’s residence, what do I do?
   1. Come to the Lassen County Sheriff-Coroner's Office to verify kinship to the decedent. Once the legal next of kin is identified, the Sheriff's Office may remove the seal so family members can enter the property.
4. Why are there two different death certificates?
   1. Often, toxicology results are necessary in determining cause of death. The initial death certificate may have to be filed with a status of "pending toxicology" then the final certificate will be generated after the results are available.
5. Will the coroner’s office work with organ donor organizations for anatomical gifts?
   1. Yes. However, the coroner's office has a duty to determine the cause, manner, and circumstances of deaths. Therefore, the coroner will not release or permit the harvest of any organ that would hamper the coroner's ability to determine cause of death