

# Cowlitz County

# Job Description

The job description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by the incumbent, and is not to be construed as an exclusive list of responsibilities, duties and skills required by the incumbent on this position. The job description does not imply an offer of employment, nor a contract for employment. It is subject to change at the discretion of the employer.

**Job Title:** Deputy Coroner II

**FLSA:** Non-Exempt

**Department:** Coroner's Office

**Union Affiliated:** No

**Reports to:** Coroner

**Pages:** 1 - 3

## General Position Summary:

This position has the authority of a Deputy Coroner. The appointment is made by the Coroner and is filed as a public record. "A deputy may perform any act which his or her principal is authorized to perform. The officer appointing deputy or other employee shall be responsible for the acts of his or her appointees upon his or her official bond and may revoke each appointment at pleasure." (R.C.W. 36.16.070).

This position will assist the offices forensic pathologist(s) with performing autopsies and post-mortem examinations to determine cause, manner, and mechanism of death under the supervision of the Coroner and/or Forensic Pathologist. This position collects evidence for legal investigations, assuming technical responsibility for histology, cytology, radiology, photography, evidence collection, identification, and disposition. Prepares examination room, laboratory, bodies for autopsy, cares for all pre-autopsy details, ensures proper supplies and inventories, and ensures the cleanliness of all areas of the office environment. Perform general clerical and customer assistance support.

## Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Receive and process notifications of death. Respond to the scene of death. Determine if it falls under Coroner's jurisdiction and/or determine if there is a need for an autopsy.
2. Conduct death site investigations to determine the circumstances surrounding death, including time and probable cause. Collect medical data and demographic information. Collect/recover body's personal property and disposes of it accordingly.
3. Gather, transport, secure, store and transfer body/human remains and evidence to and from the county morgue.
4. Locate and notify next-of-kin, in person, of the death. Release body/remains to funeral homes.
5. Assist with forensic autopsies including preparation of the room and the body, identify tissues and fluids, collection and preservation of physical and biological evidence for criminal and civil cases, and prepare body for release, and other technical medical tasks.
6. Write comprehensive statements of investigation and other reports to support establishment of cause, manner, and mechanism of death.
7. Coordinate medical and other specialist's services or consultation required to assist in the investigation and autopsy.
8. Maintain morgue's cleanliness. Maintain appropriate supplies, and tools.
9. Perform general clerical functions, including files, logs and records maintenance, department's correspondence and reports, and transcribing reports.
10. Consult and collaborate with attorneys and other agencies. Testify in court regarding cause, manner, and mechanism of death and other related issues.
11. Participates in staff meetings. Provide work guidance and plans of action.

12. Attend to training and maintain up to date in ordinance, codes, and legal changes pertaining to the trade and related subjects.
13. Prepare to obtain professional certification through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.
14. Perform other duties as assigned.

### **Minimum Qualifications:**

1. A two-year degree from a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in biology, physiology, forensic studies, anatomy, medical or criminal justice disciplines.
2. One-year experience in death investigation (e.g. assisting in autopsies, pathology lab work, scene investigation). Or any combination of education and experience that provides the skills to successfully perform the duties of this position.
3. Familiar with applicable Washington State statutes.
4. Will have basic knowledge and understanding of medicolegal death investigations and will have attended the Washington State Medicolegal Death Investigation Course within one-year of employment.
5. Possess and maintain a valid driver's license.

### **Required Skills and Abilities:**

1. Knowledge of applicable laws and standard practices related to the duties of the Coroner's Office.
2. Interpersonal and customer service skills to effectively deal with grieving families, and others requiring services. Develop and maintain good working relations with dept. staff, other county employees, other agencies, the public, and the media.
3. Assist with autopsies, conduct investigations and assist in determining the cause, manner, and mechanism of death. Maintain accurate and organized records.
4. Excellent communication skills, both orally and in writing, in a professional business-like manner. Skilled at preparing thorough, organized and clearly presented technical reports. Convey medical and technical information in a manner that is understandable to the audience.
5. Work well independently as well as in a cooperative environment. Multi-task work environment with deadlines.
6. Able to exercise judgment and discretion of sensitive or confidential matters.

### **Equipment or Tools:**

1. Operate a personal computer, with office and other software commonly used in the trade. Operate standard office equipment.
2. Operate tools necessary to perform forensic autopsies, external examination, and the collection of evidence.
3. The use of equipment necessary to make the extraction of decedents from varying environment.
4. The use of proper personal protective gear, for extended periods, in hazardous conditions.
5. Safely drive a vehicle.

### **Job Scope:**

#### Level of Supervision Received:

Requires low levels of supervision once trained. Provide regular status reports.

#### Level of Supervisory Responsibilities:

Not supervisory in nature, but may be required to lead new or less skilled employees ensuring that duties are performed according to standards.

#### Contact/Communication with others:

Extensive oral contacts and communications in person and over the phone. Written communication via email, correspondence and fax. Extensive technical report writing. Prepare department correspondence. Contacts will occur with the own department staff, other county employees and agencies, other local, state and federal agencies, the public and grieving families.

#### Decision Making Capacities:

Broad but limited to the essential duties of the position. Request assistance, clearance or guidance for unusual or difficult matters.

### **Working Conditions:**

1. May require work hours in excess of 7.5 hours per day or 5 days per week. On-call status 24 hours per day and/or 7 days per week.

2. May be exposed to the elements or weather conditions during inspections, and other physical hazards or obstacles to reach inspection areas.
3. Tolerate exposure to death scenes, decomposed bodies, contagious diseases, vermin, and other difficult exposures common to death scenes.
4. May require travel for training, commute to other agencies, investigation sites, which may include remote areas.
5. Observe, abide, and set example, of all county and department policies, goals, and objectives.
6. Able to work well and complete duties under stress, and deadlines, while attending to multiple duties simultaneously.
7. Tolerate prolonged computer related exposure, ability to sit/stand at a workstation for long periods.

<b>Physical Requirements</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Rarely ( 1-12%)</b>	<b>Occasionally ( 13-33%)</b>	<b>Frequently ( 34-66%)</b>	<b>Regularly ( 67-100%)</b>
Standing				X	
Walking				X	
Climbing		X			
Sitting			X		
Stooping / Kneeling			X		
Lift/Carry up to 15 lbs.					X
Lift/Carry up to 30 lbs.					X
Lift/Carry up to 50 lbs.					X
Push/Pull up to 25 lbs. of exertion					X
Push/Pull up to 50 lbs. of exertion					X
Work below waist level					X
Work at waist to shoulder level					X
Work above shoulder level			X		
Reach further than arm's length			X		
Fingering				X	
Grasping / Holding				X	
Talking					X
Hearing					X
Seeing					X
Work in confined spaces		X			
Exposed to extreme temperatures	X				
Operate tools or machinery (incl. office equip.)				X	
Operate motorized vehicles/equipment					X
Work at heights balancing		X			
Use/exposed to hazardous substances			X		

January 2015

Last Revision

Department Head

Incumbent

Date