

7.5 Complaints and Appeals

7.5.1. The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has a documented policy and process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints and appeals. (Attached)

7.5.2 The Office makes the policy/process available to any interested party upon request. The policy/process can e-mailed, given directly to any interested party, or sent as a hard copy by mail upon request.

7.5.3 Upon receipt of a complaint, appropriate staff will determine whether the complaint relates to any work or activities for which the Medical Examiner's Office is responsible, and if so, the full complaint process will begin. If the complaint does not fall under the function/authority of the Medical Examiner's Office, the complainant will be so-notified, and this will be documented on the complaint/appeals form.

7.5.4. As per the policy/process the Spokane Medical Examiner's Office is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the handling process for complaints and appeals.

7.5.5 Investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions.

7.6 Complaints and Appeals Process

7.6.1 The Spokane County Complaints and Appeals Process/Policy includes:

- a) A description of the process for receiving, validating, investigating the complaint or appeal, and deciding what actions are to be taken in response to the complaint.
- b) A complaint/appeals form and database entries to track and record complaints and appeals, including actions to resolve them.
- c) The complaint/appeals form is used to verify that any appropriate action is taken in a timely fashion.

7.6.2 The Medical Examiner's Office receiving a complaint, is responsible for the investigation of the complaint, including gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint/appeal. The investigative function is delegated to office members with expertise in the area/topic of the complaint.

7.6.3 The Office policy/procedure includes provisions to acknowledge receipt of the complaint or appeal, and to provide the complainant or appellant with progress reports and the outcome.

7.6.4 All complaints and appeals will be investigated and documented by individuals not involved in the original determination or investigation. Those individuals assigned to the complaint/appeal will determine a resolution/decision, and communicate that resolution/decision to the complainant.

7.6.5 Whenever possible, the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office shall give formal notice of the end of the complaint and appeals handling process to the complainant/appellant.