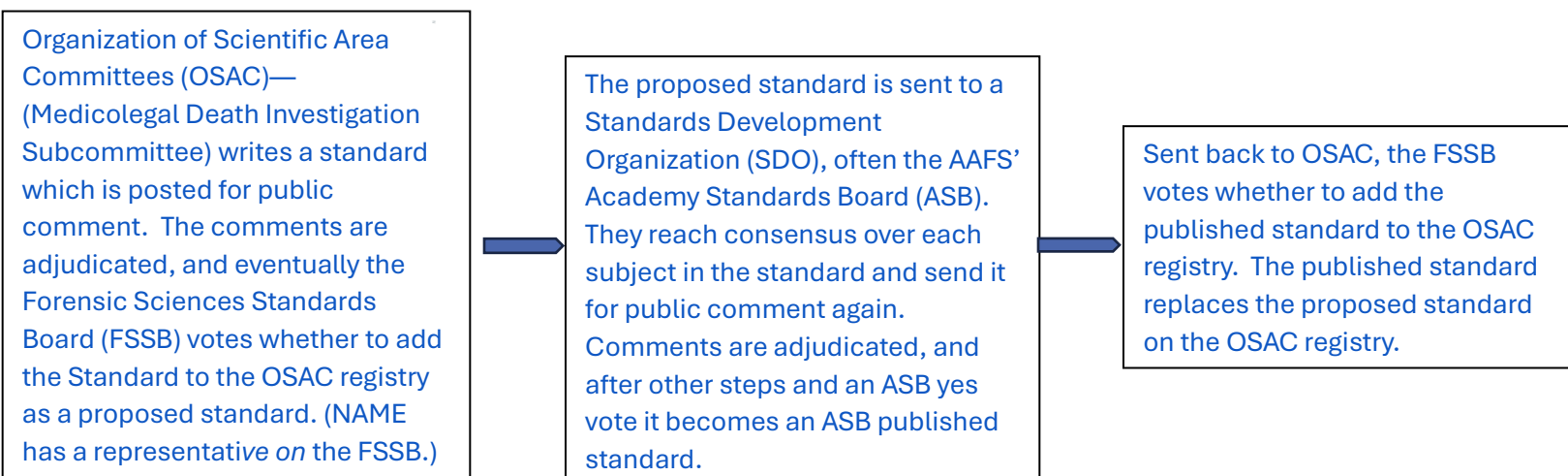


In 2014 the federal government began an initiative to improve forensic sciences by forming OSAC, the Organization of Scientific Area Committees. The committees and subcommittees in OSAC, such as the Medicolegal Death Investigation subcommittee, write standards and other documents using a consensus process. Many NAME members participate in the standards development process at multiple levels, and NAME has agreed to support standards development.

NAME has identified 25 OSAC registry standards/documents pertinent to Medical Examiner/Coroner practice. The Executive Committee plans to introduce NAME membership to these documents over the course of one year, by providing brief summaries and key points in each document also linking to the full document and supporting materials. Following a brief explanation of the OSAC process the first of the 25 standards is reviewed below. (All documents in the OSAC registry are available to the public on the OSAC registry. All 25 summaries will be available on the NAME website.)

**Definition of Standard:** Specific benchmarks, requirements, or criteria set by regulatory or professional organizations. Normative. The word “**shall**” in a standard denotes a requirement. “**Should**” is a recommendation but not a requirement.

#### **Basic OSAC and Standards Development Process:**



**ANSI/ASB Standard 125, Organizational and Foundational Standard for Medicolegal Death Investigation, 2021. 1<sup>st</sup>. Ed.**

*Note: This is a brief summary and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. See link to full document (below).*

**Standard 125** is an overarching document describing the basic components of a medicolegal death investigation system.

**Infrastructure:** “Any office conducting medicolegal death investigations **shall** have adequate facilities and equipment to fulfill the office’s statutory mandates . . . “:

There **should** be funding (in the broader community) for education in autopsy pathology as an integral part of pathology training.

Resources and opportunities for research in forensic pathology **should** be provided for advancement of the discipline.

**Personnel:** “Any office conducting medicolegal death investigation **shall** have an adequate number of specialized, well-trained personnel to fulfill the office’s statutory mandates. . . ”

**Forensic Pathologists:**

“A forensic pathologist **shall** be a physician who is certified in forensic pathology by the American Board of Pathology (ABP, a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties), or its international equivalent.

**Forensic pathologists know** and adhere to professional autopsy standards (NAME standards)

**Medical Examiners** are forensic pathologists appointed to their positions.

**Coroners should** be ABMDI certified but must be ABMDI certified if performing the role of a medicolegal death investigator.

**Medicolegal Death Investigators shall** be ABMDI certified and if in training **shall** be supervised by an ABMDI certified investigator. Medicolegal death investigators know of and adhere to guidelines for medicolegal investigations such as *Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator*.

**Required Practices for Medicolegal Death Investigation Offices:**

All reported deaths are assessed by a forensic pathologist or certified investigator.

A forensic pathologist determines the cause of death.

Manner is determined by a forensic pathologist or chief medicolegal officer (includes coroners and others) in consultation with a forensic pathologist.

All forensic autopsies are performed by a forensic pathologist or resident/fellow in training in consultation with a forensic pathologist.

**Shall** participate in multi-disciplinary death reviews such as child death review.

Blood **shall** be collected in deaths that are unexplained after autopsy for toxicology and/or genetic studies.

**Shall** remain free from influence from other agencies.

Death investigations are parallel to but distinct from investigations by other agencies such as law enforcement.

**Accreditation:**

All organization conducting medicolegal death investigations **shall** be accredited by NAME or IAC&ME.

**Link to Standard:** <https://www.aafs.org/asb-standard/organizational-and-foundational-standard-medicolegal-death-investigation>

**Since this is a standard developed and published through ASB, a checklist is also available to assist with implementation:**

[https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI\\_ANSIASB%20125\\_Checklist%20V1.1\\_1.xlsx](https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI_ANSIASB%20125_Checklist%20V1.1_1.xlsx)

**ASB also created a factsheet for this standard:**

<https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI%20ANSI%20ASB%20125.pdf>

**Link to OSAC Registry (lists all documents):**

<https://www.nist.gov/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/osac-registry>

