

## **OSAC REVIEW SPRING 2025 (OSAC = Organization of Scientific Area Committees)**

**NAME OSAC UPDATE #10:** OSAC 2023-N-0004

### **Standard for Interactions Between Medical Examiner, Coroner and all other Medicolegal Death Investigation Agencies and Organ and Tissue Procurement Organizations and Eye Banks**

This standard was developed by the OSAC subcommittee Medicolegal Death Investigation. It has been submitted to a standards development organization, and may change as it undergoes revisions in that consensus based process.

*This is a brief summary of OSAC 2023-N-0004, and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. **See link to full document (below).***

**Value:** Useful if writing or revising office policy regarding organ and tissue donation. Also helpful in establishing or reviewing contract or MOU with donation organizations.

#### **Foreward:**

The standard's purpose is to enhance communication among OPOs, Eye Banks and Death Investigation systems. The document seeks to balance the integrity of death investigations with the needs of donation organizations.

**Shall** as used in the document indicates a mandatory provision

**Should** indicates recommended as a best practice, but not mandatory

**SCOPE:** The document does not include donation in the context of a mass fatality event.

## **Definitions:**

Most of these are self-explanatory and duplicative of the definitions document previously reviewed as OSAC-NAME document # 9. Two exceptions are **copied** here:

**external evaluation** Physical assessment of the decedent by a medicolegal death investigator

**external examination** Diagnostic medical procedure conducted by a pathologist that consists of physical inspection of the decedent without internal examination; can include ancillary tests

## **REQUIREMENTS (Abbreviated):**

1. Medicolegal Death Investigation Authorities shall cooperate and communicate with organ, eye, and tissue procurement agencies. The procurement agencies, in turn, shall work to preserve evidence, MDI authority, and aid in determining cause and manner of death as requested.
2. Cooperation includes the requirement of sharing referral information when deaths occur outside hospitals.
3. Interactions shall be guided by written agreements/memorandums of understanding.
4. Jurisdictional law, and standards of both Medicolegal Death Investigation Authorities and Procurement Agencies are to be considered factors in creating written agreements and MOUs.
5. Items to be included in the agreement or MOU (21 total items) are listed and include: notification procedures, necessary specimens to be obtained, acceptable documentation, handling next-of-kin communication, transportation of decedents, resolution of any identification issues, etc.
6. Donation shall be allowed to take place in an expeditious manner.
7. The Medicolegal Death Investigation Authority shall have the option of performing an external examination prior to donation, and/or to attend the donation.
8. The MDI Authority shall request any necessary additional tests/procedures prior to procurement, such as full body photography

9. Samples for toxicological analysis shall be collected by the procurement agency when requested.
10. Samples for culture shall be collected by the procurement agency when requested.
11. At the time of procurement notes and photographs shall be utilized to document natural disease such as PEs and injuries.
12. If whole organs are procured, the MDI Authority shall be provided with a report describing the organ, and will be given any remaining tissue (such as the heart after valves) if requested.
13. Any organ removed but not transplanted shall be returned to the MDI Authority.
14. If the MDI Authority discovers a lesion suspicious for malignancy or infection, that finding shall be communicated to procurement in a timely manner.
15. In Donation after Cardiac Death cases, the MDI Authority shall be notified as early as possible to allow for MDI investigation to take place prior to death pronouncement.
16. The goal of the Death Investigation Authority shall be to allow procurement in all cases.
17. The MDI Authority shall familiarize themselves with the laws of the jurisdiction regarding first person consent donors.
18. The MDI Authority shall have a policy that proactively addresses potential conflicts of interest regarding relationships with procurement agencies.
19. Mutual training presentations may be helpful.

**Full Document:**

<https://www.nist.gov/document/osac-2023-n-0004-standard-interactions-between-medical-examiner-coroner-and-all-other-0>