

IC 36-2-14

Chapter 14. County Coroner

IC 36-2-14-1

Application of chapter

Sec. 1. This chapter applies to all counties.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-1.5

Child death pathologist

Sec. 1.5. As used in this chapter, "child death pathologist" means a physician described in IC 16-35-7-3(b).

As added by P.L.225-2007, SEC.10.

IC 36-2-14-2

Residence; term of office

Sec. 2. (a) A county coroner must reside within the county as provided in Article 6, Section 6 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana. The coroner forfeits office if the coroner ceases to be a resident of the county.

(b) The term of office of the county coroner under Article 6, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana is four (4) years and continues until a successor is elected and qualified.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1. Amended by P.L.3-1987, SEC.549.

IC 36-2-14-3

Commission of coroner

Sec. 3. The governor shall commission each county coroner.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-4

Duties as county sheriff

Sec. 4. The coroner shall perform the duties of the county sheriff only in cases in which the sheriff:

- (1) is interested or incapacitated from serving; and
- (2) has no chief deputy who may perform his duties.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1. Amended by Acts 1980, P.L.125, SEC.24.

IC 36-2-14-5

Service of warrant for arrest of county sheriff; custody of jail and prisoners

Sec. 5. A warrant for the arrest of the county sheriff shall be served by the coroner or any other person to whom it may be legally directed. The coroner, who shall commit the sheriff to the county jail, has custody of the jail and its prisoners during the imprisonment of the sheriff.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-5.5

Duties of child death pathologist

Sec. 5.5. A child death pathologist shall:

- (1) consult with a coroner concerning a death described in section 6.3(b) of this chapter;
- (2) conduct an autopsy of a child as described in sections 6.3(c) and 6.7(b) of this chapter; and
- (3) perform duties described in section 6.7(e) of this chapter.

As added by P.L.225-2007, SEC.11.

IC 36-2-14-6

Investigation of death of person; certificate of death; autopsy

Sec. 6. (a) Whenever the coroner is notified that a person in the county:

- (1) has died from violence;
- (2) has died by casualty;
- (3) has died when apparently in good health;
- (4) has died in an apparently suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner; or
- (5) has been found dead;

the coroner shall, before the scene of the death is disturbed, notify a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in that area. The agency shall assist the coroner in conducting an investigation of how the person died and a medical investigation of the cause of death. The coroner may hold the remains of the decedent until the investigation of how the person died and the medical investigation of the cause of death are concluded.

(b) The coroner:

- (1) shall file a certificate of death with the county health department, or, if applicable, a multiple county health department, of the county in which the individual died, within seventy-two (72) hours after the completion of the death investigation;
- (2) shall complete the certificate of death utilizing all verifiable information establishing the time and date of death; and
- (3) may file a pending investigation certificate of death before completing the certificate of death, if necessary.

(c) If this section applies, the body and the scene of death may not be disturbed until:

- (1) the coroner has photographed them in the manner that most fully discloses how the person died; and
- (2) law enforcement and the coroner have finished their initial assessment of the scene of death.

However, a coroner or law enforcement officer may order a body to be moved before photographs are taken if the position or location of the body unduly interferes with activities carried on where the body is found, but the body may not be moved from the immediate area and must be moved without substantially destroying or altering the evidence present.

(d) When acting under this section, if the coroner considers it

necessary to have an autopsy performed, is required to perform an autopsy under subsection (f), or is requested by the prosecuting attorney of the county to perform an autopsy, the coroner shall employ a:

- (1) physician certified by the American Board of Pathology; or
- (2) pathology resident acting under the direct supervision of a physician certified in anatomic pathology by the American Board of Pathology;

to perform the autopsy. The physician performing the autopsy shall be paid a fee of at least fifty dollars (\$50) from the county treasury.

(e) If:

- (1) at the request of:
 - (A) the decedent's spouse;
 - (B) a child of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse;
 - (C) a parent of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse or children;
 - (D) a brother or sister of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse, children, or parents; or
 - (E) a grandparent of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse, children, parents, brothers, or sisters;
- (2) in any death, two (2) or more witnesses who corroborate the circumstances surrounding death are present; and
- (3) two (2) physicians who are licensed to practice medicine in the state and who have made separate examinations of the decedent certify the same cause of death in an affidavit within twenty-four (24) hours after death;

an autopsy need not be performed. The affidavits shall be filed with the circuit court clerk.

(f) A county coroner may not certify the cause of death in the case of the sudden and unexpected death of a child who is less than three (3) years old unless an autopsy is performed at county expense. However, a coroner may certify the cause of death of a child described in this subsection without the performance of an autopsy if subsection (e) applies to the death of the child.

(g) After consultation with the law enforcement agency investigating the death of a decedent, the coroner shall do the following:

- (1) Inform a crematory authority if a person is barred under IC 23-14-31-26(c) from serving as the authorizing agent with respect to the cremation of the decedent's body because the coroner made the determination under IC 23-14-31-26(c)(2) in connection with the death of the decedent.
- (2) Inform a cemetery owner if a person is barred under IC 23-14-55-2(c) from authorizing the disposition of the body or cremated remains of the decedent because the coroner made the determination under IC 23-14-55-2(c)(2) in connection with the death of the decedent.
- (3) Inform a seller of prepaid services or merchandise if a person's contract is unenforceable under IC 30-2-13-23(b)

because the coroner made the determination under IC 30-2-13-23(b)(4) in connection with the death of the decedent.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1. Amended by Acts 1981, P.L.39, SEC.2; P.L.106-1986, SEC.2; P.L.339-1987, SEC.1; P.L.179-2003, SEC.5; P.L.102-2007, SEC.5; P.L.157-2007, SEC.3; P.L.225-2007, SEC.12; P.L.34-2011, SEC.12.

IC 36-2-14-6.3

Coroner notification of child deaths; coroner consultation with child death pathologist; suspicious, unexpected, or unexplained child deaths; autopsy

Sec. 6.3. (a) A coroner shall immediately notify:

(1) the local office of the department of child services by using the statewide hotline for the department; and

(2) either:

(A) the local child fatality review team; or

(B) if the county does not have a local child fatality review team, the statewide child fatality review committee;

of each death of a person who is less than eighteen (18) years of age, or appears to be less than eighteen (18) years of age and who has died in an apparently suspicious, unexpected, or unexplained manner.

(b) If a child less than eighteen (18) years of age dies in an apparently suspicious, unexpected, or unexplained manner, the coroner shall consult with a child death pathologist to determine whether an autopsy is necessary. If the coroner and the child death pathologist disagree over the need for an autopsy, the county prosecutor shall determine whether an autopsy is necessary. If the autopsy is considered necessary, a child death pathologist or a pathology resident acting under the direct supervision of a child death pathologist shall conduct the autopsy within twenty-four (24) hours. If the autopsy is not considered necessary, the autopsy shall not be conducted.

(c) If a child death pathologist and coroner agree under subsection (b) that an autopsy is necessary, the child death pathologist or a pathology resident acting under the direct supervision of a child death pathologist shall conduct the autopsy of the child.

As added by P.L.225-2007, SEC.13. Amended by P.L.131-2009, SEC.75; P.L.128-2012, SEC.183.

IC 36-2-14-6.5

Duty to make positive identification; manner of positive identification; exception

Sec. 6.5. (a) As used in this section, "DNA analysis" means an identification process in which the unique genetic code of an individual that is carried by the individual's deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is compared to genetic codes carried in DNA found in bodily substance samples obtained by a law enforcement agency in the exercise of the law enforcement agency's investigative function.

(b) As used in this section, "immediate family member" means,

with respect to a particular dead person, an individual who is at least eighteen (18) years of age and who is one (1) of the following:

- (1) The dead person's spouse.
- (2) The dead person's child.
- (3) The dead person's parent.
- (4) The dead person's grandparent.
- (5) The dead person's sibling.

(c) The coroner shall make a positive identification of a dead person unless extraordinary circumstances described in subsection (d) exist. In making a positive identification, the coroner shall determine the identity of a dead person by one (1) of the following methods:

- (1) Fingerprint identification.
- (2) DNA analysis.
- (3) Dental record analysis.
- (4) Positive identification by at least one (1) of the dead person's immediate family members if the dead person's body is in a physical condition that would allow for the dead person to be reasonably recognized.

(d) For the purposes of subsection (c), extraordinary circumstances exist if, after a thorough investigation, the coroner determines that identification of the dead person is not possible under any of the four (4) methods described in subsection (c).

As added by P.L.157-2007, SEC.4.

IC 36-2-14-6.7

Autopsies of children who may have died of sudden infant death syndrome; autopsy reports

Sec. 6.7. (a) This section applies to a child who:

- (1) died suddenly and unexpectedly;
- (2) was less than three (3) years of age at the time of death; and
- (3) was in apparent good health before dying.

(b) A child death pathologist or a pathology resident acting under the direct supervision of a child death pathologist shall conduct an autopsy of a child described in subsection (a).

(c) A county coroner may not certify the cause of death of a child described in subsection (a) until an autopsy is performed at county expense.

(d) The county coroner shall contact the parent or guardian of a child described in subsection (a) and notify the parent or guardian that an autopsy will be conducted at county expense.

(e) The child death pathologist shall:

- (1) ensure that a tangible summary of the autopsy results is provided;
- (2) provide informational material concerning sudden infant death syndrome; and
- (3) unless the release of autopsy results would jeopardize a law enforcement investigation, provide notice that a parent or guardian has the right to receive the preliminary autopsy results; to the parents or guardian of the child within one (1) week after the autopsy.

(f) If a parent or guardian of a child described in subsection (a) requests the autopsy report of the child, the coroner shall provide the autopsy report to the parent or guardian within thirty (30) days after the:

- (1) request; or
 - (2) completion of the autopsy report;
- whichever is later, at no cost.

(g) A coroner shall notify:

- (1) a local child fatality review team; or
 - (2) if the county does not have a local child fatality review team, the statewide child fatality review committee;
- of the death of a child described in subsection (a).

As added by P.L.225-2007, SEC.14.

IC 36-2-14-7

Examination of witnesses; service of physician; payment

Sec. 7. (a) At an investigation under this chapter, the coroner shall examine persons wanting to testify and may examine persons he has summoned by his subpoena. Witnesses shall answer under oath all questions concerning the death under investigation.

(b) If a physician is required to attend an investigation and make a post mortem examination, the coroner shall certify this service to the county executive, which shall order payment for the physician from the county treasury.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-8

Witness fees

Sec. 8. A witness testifying before a county coroner is entitled to the same fees as a witness testifying in the circuit court for the county.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1. Amended by Acts 1980, P.L.125, SEC.25.

IC 36-2-14-9

Witness testimony

Sec. 9. The testimony of each witness at a coroner's investigation shall be reduced to writing and signed by him. The coroner shall, by recognizance in a reasonable sum, bind any witness whose testimony relates to the trial of a person concerned in the death to give evidence in court and shall send the written evidence and recognizance of the witness to the court. The coroner shall commit to the county jail a witness who refuses to enter into the recognizance required by this section.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-10

Coroner's verdict and report; autopsy records; confidentiality

Sec. 10. (a) After viewing the body, hearing the evidence, and making all necessary inquiries, the coroner shall draw up and sign his

verdict on the death under consideration. The coroner shall also make a written report giving an accurate description of the deceased person, his name if it can be determined, and the amount of money and other property found with the body. The verdict and the written report are subject to inspection and copying under IC 5-14-3-3.

(b) Except as provided in subsections (c), (d), and (e), a photograph, video recording, or audio recording of an autopsy in the custody of a medical examiner is declared confidential for purposes of IC 5-14-3-4(a)(1).

(c) A surviving spouse may:

- (1) view and copy a photograph or video recording; and
- (2) listen to and copy an audio recording;

of the deceased spouse's autopsy. If there is no surviving spouse, the surviving parents shall have access to the records under this section. If there is no surviving spouse or parent, an adult child shall have access to the records.

(d) Upon making a written request, a unit (as defined in IC 36-1-2-23), the state, an agency of the state, the federal government, or an agency of the federal government, while in performance of their official duty, may:

- (1) view and copy a photograph or video recording; and
- (2) listen to and copy an audio recording;

of an autopsy. Unless otherwise required in the performance of official duties, the identity of the deceased must remain confidential.

(e) The coroner or the coroner's designee having custody of a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of an autopsy may use or allow the use of the photograph, video recording, or audio recording of the autopsy for case consultation with a pathologist or forensic scientist. The coroner or the coroner's designee having custody of a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of an autopsy may also use or allow the use of the photograph, video recording, or audio recording for training or educational purposes (as defined in IC 16-39-7.1-1.5) if all information that identifies the individual on whom the autopsy was performed is masked or removed from the photograph, video recording, or audio recording. For purposes of this subsection, information that identifies an individual consists of:

- (1) the name;
- (2) the address;
- (3) the Social Security number;
- (4) a full view of the face; or
- (5) identifying marks on the body that are unrelated to the medical condition or medical status;

of the deceased individual. A coroner or coroner's designee who allows the use of autopsy information under this subsection has a duty to disclose to each person to whom the coroner or coroner's designee releases it that the information is confidential and may not be used for a purpose other than the purpose for which it was originally released. Information disclosed under this subsection is confidential. A coroner or coroner's designee who fails to disclose the

confidentiality restrictions of this information commits a Class A misdemeanor.

(f) Except as provided in subsection (e), the coroner or the coroner's designee having custody of a photograph, a video, or an audio recording of an autopsy may not permit a person to:

- (1) view or copy the photograph or video recording; and
- (2) listen to or copy the audio recording;

of an autopsy without a court order.

(g) A court, upon a showing of good cause, may issue an order authorizing a person to:

- (1) view or copy a photograph or video recording; and
- (2) listen to or copy an audio recording;

of an autopsy, and may prescribe any restrictions or stipulations that the court considers appropriate.

(h) In determining good cause under subsection (g), the court shall consider:

- (1) whether the disclosure is necessary for the public evaluation of governmental performance;
- (2) the seriousness of the intrusion into the family's right to privacy;
- (3) whether the disclosure of the photograph, video recording, or audio recording is by the least intrusive means available; and
- (4) the availability of similar information in other public records, regardless of form.

(i) In all cases, the viewing, copying, listening to, or other handling of a photograph, video recording, or audio recording of an autopsy must be under the direct supervision of the coroner, or the coroner's designee, who is the custodian of the record.

(j) A surviving spouse shall be given:

- (1) reasonable notice of the petition filed with the court to view or copy a photograph or video recording of an autopsy or a petition to listen to or copy an audio recording;
- (2) a copy of the petition filed with the court to view or copy a photograph or video recording of an autopsy or a petition to listen to or copy an audio recording; and
- (3) reasonable notice of the opportunity to be present and heard at any hearing on the matter.

(k) If there is no surviving spouse, the notice under subsection (j) must be given to the deceased's parents, and if the deceased has no living parent, the notice must be given to the adult children of the deceased.

(l) A coroner or coroner's designee who:

- (1) is the custodian of a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of an autopsy; and
- (2) knowingly or intentionally violates this section;

commits a Class A misdemeanor.

(m) A person who knowingly or intentionally violates a court order issued under this section commits a Class A misdemeanor.

(n) A person who:

- (1) receives autopsy information under subsection (e); and

(2) knowingly or intentionally uses the information in a manner other than the specified purpose for which it was released; commits a Class A misdemeanor.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1. Amended by P.L.4-1994, SEC.22; P.L.271-2001, SEC.4; P.L.179-2003, SEC.6.

IC 36-2-14-11

Property or money of deceased person subject to coroner's investigation; found with body or at scene of death; taking possession; publication; search for person entitled; delivery to county treasurer or sheriff

Sec. 11. (a) This section applies to money or other personal property:

(1) owned by a deceased person whose death is subject to a coroner's investigation; or

(2) found:

(A) on a body; or

(B) at the scene of death.

(b) If money or personal property is not claimed by a person entitled to them, the coroner shall do the following:

(1) Take possession of the property.

(2) Publish, in accordance with IC 5-3-1, a description of the deceased and the name of the deceased if known.

(3) Make a reasonable search to find a person who is entitled to the money or other personal property.

(c) If, after complying with subsection (b), the coroner does not know of a person entitled to the money, the coroner shall deliver the money to the county treasurer for deposit in the county general fund.

(d) If, after complying with subsection (b), the coroner does not know of a person entitled to the personal property other than money that has an intrinsic value, the coroner shall deliver the personal property to the sheriff for sale at any auction that the sheriff conducts under law. The sheriff shall deposit the receipts from the auction of the personal property in the county general fund.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1. Amended by Acts 1981, P.L.45, SEC.11; P.L.141-1992, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-12

Repealed

(Repealed by P.L.225-2007, SEC.21.)

IC 36-2-14-12.5

Coroner requests to hospitals for blood or tissue samples

Sec. 12.5. (a) A coroner shall make all reasonable attempts to promptly identify human remains, including taking the following steps:

(1) Photograph the human remains before an autopsy is conducted.

(2) X-ray the human remains.

(3) Photograph items found with the human remains.

(4) Fingerprint the remains, if possible.

(5) Obtain tissue, bone, or hair samples suitable for DNA typing, if possible.

(6) Collect any other information relevant to identification efforts.

(b) A coroner may not dispose of unidentified human remains or take any other action that will materially affect the condition of the remains until the coroner has taken the steps described in subsection (a).

(c) If human remains have not been identified after thirty (30) days, the coroner or other person having custody of the remains shall request the state police to do the following:

(1) Enter information that may assist in the identification of the remains into:

(A) the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) data base; and

(B) any other appropriate data base.

(2) Upload relevant DNA profiles from the remains to the missing persons data base of the State DNA Index System (SDIS) and the National DNA Index System (NDIS) after completion of the DNA analysis and other procedures required for data base entry.

(d) If unidentified human remains are identified as belonging to a missing person, the coroner shall:

(1) notify the law enforcement agency handling the missing persons case that the missing person is deceased; and

(2) instruct the law enforcement agency to make documented efforts to contact family members of the missing person.

(e) No person may order the cremation of unidentified human remains.

As added by P.L.92-2007, SEC.6. Amended by P.L.225-2007, SEC.15.

IC 36-2-14-13

Immunity from civil liability; autopsy

Sec. 13. A person who in good faith orders or performs a medical examination or autopsy under statutory authority is immune from civil liability for damages for ordering or performing the examination or autopsy.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-14

Repealed

(Repealed by P.L.225-2007, SEC.21.)

IC 36-2-14-15

Compensation

Sec. 15. When fixing the compensation of county officers under this title, the county fiscal body shall fix:

(1) compensation for the coroner as if he is licensed to practice

as a physician in Indiana; and

(2) compensation for the coroner as if he is not licensed to practice as a physician in Indiana.

The compensation fixed under subdivision (1) must be one and one-half (1 1/2) times that fixed under subdivision (2). The county fiscal body shall then determine whether or not the coroner is a licensed physician and shall fix his compensation in the proper amount.

As added by Acts 1980, P.L.212, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-16

Counties over 400,000 population; disposition of unclaimed bodies

Sec. 16. (a) This section applies to each county having a population of more than four hundred thousand (400,000).

(b) For purposes of this section, a body is unclaimed if:

(1) a person cannot be located to take custody of the body; or

(2) there is a person to take custody of the body, but that person cannot or will not assume financial responsibility for disposition of the body.

(c) Except as provided in IC 21-44-2, the coroner may order the burial or cremation of any unclaimed body left in the coroner's custody.

(d) If the deceased died without leaving money or other means necessary to defray the funeral expenses, the coroner may contract with a funeral director licensed under IC 25-15 to dispose of the body. The necessary and reasonable expenses for disposing of the body shall be paid by the county auditor upon the order of the coroner.

As added by P.L.106-1986, SEC.3. Amended by P.L.3-1990, SEC.123; P.L.2-2007, SEC.385.

IC 36-2-14-17

Violent or suspicious death of person; failure to notify authorities of discovery of body or moving body from scene; offenses

Sec. 17. (a) A person who knowingly or intentionally fails to immediately notify the coroner or a law enforcement agency of the discovery of the body of a person who:

(1) has died from violence;

(2) has died in an apparently suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner; or

(3) has died at less than three (3) years of age;

commits a Class B infraction. However, the failure to immediately notify under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor if the person fails to immediately notify with the intent to hinder a criminal investigation.

(b) A person who, with the intent to hinder a criminal investigation and without the permission of the coroner or a law enforcement officer, knowingly or intentionally alters the scene of death of a person who has died:

(1) from violence; or

(2) in an apparently suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner; commits a Level 6 felony.
As added by P.L.339-1987, SEC.2. Amended by P.L.225-2007, SEC.16; P.L.158-2013, SEC.674.

IC 36-2-14-18

Public inspection and copying of information; investigatory records; copies of autopsy; availability of report

Sec. 18. (a) Notwithstanding IC 5-14-3-4(b)(1), when a coroner investigates a death, the office of the coroner is required to make available for public inspection and copying the following:

- (1) The name, age, address, sex, and race of the deceased.
- (2) The address where the dead body was found, or if there is no address the location where the dead body was found and, if different, the address where the death occurred, or if there is no address the location where the death occurred.
- (3) The name of the agency to which the death was reported and the name of the person reporting the death.
- (4) The name of any public official or governmental employee present at the scene of the death and the name of the person certifying or pronouncing the death.
- (5) Information regarding an autopsy (requested or performed) limited to the date, the person who performed the autopsy, where the autopsy was performed, and a conclusion as to:
 - (A) the probable cause of death;
 - (B) the probable manner of death; and
 - (C) the probable mechanism of death.
- (6) The location to which the body was removed, the person determining the location to which the body was removed, and the authority under which the decision to remove the body was made.
- (7) The records required to be filed by a coroner under section 6 of this chapter and the verdict and the written report required under section 10 of this chapter.

(b) A county coroner or a coroner's deputy who receives an investigatory record from a law enforcement agency shall treat the investigatory record with the same confidentiality as the law enforcement agency would treat the investigatory record.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, other than a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of the autopsy, upon the written request of a parent of the decedent, an adult child of the decedent, a next of kin of the decedent, or an insurance company investigating a claim arising from the death of the individual upon whom the autopsy was performed. A parent of the decedent, an adult child of the decedent, a next of kin of the decedent, and an insurance company are prohibited from publicly disclosing any information contained in the report beyond that information that may otherwise be disclosed by a coroner under this section. This prohibition does not apply to information disclosed in communications in conjunction

with the investigation, settlement, or payment of the claim.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, other than a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of the autopsy, upon the written request of:

- (1) the director of the division of disability and rehabilitative services established by IC 12-9-1-1;
- (2) the director of the division of mental health and addiction established by IC 12-21-1-1; or
- (3) the director of the division of aging established by IC 12-9.1-1-1;

in connection with a division's review of the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual who received services from a division or through a division at the time of the individual's death.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available, upon written request, a full copy of an autopsy report, including a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of the autopsy, to:

- (1) the department of child services established by IC 31-25-1-1, including an office of the department located in the county where the death occurred;
- (2) the statewide child fatality review committee established by IC 16-49-4; or
- (3) a county child fatality review team or regional child fatality review team established under IC 16-49-2 for the area where the death occurred;

for purposes of an entity described in subdivisions (1) through (3) conducting a review or an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of a child (as defined in IC 16-49-1-2) and making a determination as to whether the death of the child was a result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. An autopsy report made available under this subsection is confidential and shall not be disclosed to another individual or agency, unless otherwise authorized or required by law.

(f) Except as provided in subsection (g), the information required to be available under subsection (a) must be completed not later than fourteen (14) days after the completion of:

- (1) the autopsy report; or
- (2) if applicable, any other report, including a toxicology report, requested by the coroner as part of the coroner's investigation;

whichever is completed last.

(g) The prosecuting attorney may petition a circuit or superior court for an order prohibiting the coroner from publicly disclosing the information required in subsection (a). The prosecuting attorney shall serve a copy of the petition on the coroner.

(h) Upon receipt of a copy of the petition described in subsection (g), the coroner shall keep the information confidential until the court rules on the petition.

(i) The court shall grant a petition filed under subsection (g) if the prosecuting attorney proves by a preponderance of the evidence that

public access or dissemination of the information specified in subsection (a) would create a significant risk of harm to the criminal investigation of the death. The court shall state in the order the reasons for granting or denying the petition. An order issued under this subsection must use the least restrictive means and duration possible when restricting access to the information. Information to which access is restricted under this subsection is confidential.

(j) Any person may petition the court to modify or terminate an order issued under subsection (i). The petition for modification or termination must allege facts demonstrating that:

- (1) the public interest will be served by allowing access; and
- (2) access to the information specified in subsection (a) would not create a significant risk to the criminal investigation of the death.

The person petitioning the court for modification or termination shall serve a copy of the petition on the prosecuting attorney and the coroner.

(k) Upon receipt of a petition for modification or termination filed under subsection (j), the court may:

- (1) summarily grant, modify, or dismiss the petition; or
- (2) set the matter for hearing.

If the court sets the matter for hearing, upon the motion of any party or upon the court's own motion, the court may close the hearing to the public.

(l) If the person filing the petition for modification or termination proves by a preponderance of the evidence that:

- (1) the public interest will be served by allowing access; and
- (2) access to the information specified in subsection (a) would not create a significant risk to the criminal investigation of the death;

the court shall modify or terminate its order restricting access to the information. In ruling on a request under this subsection, the court shall state the court's reasons for granting or denying the request.

As added by P.L.299-1989, SEC.1. Amended by P.L.4-1994, SEC.23; P.L.2-1995, SEC.129; P.L.2-1996, SEC.290; P.L.271-2001, SEC.5; P.L.243-2003, SEC.13; P.L.141-2006, SEC.113; P.L.102-2007, SEC.6; P.L.157-2007, SEC.5; P.L.225-2007, SEC.17; P.L.3-2008, SEC.257; P.L.119-2013, SEC.23.

IC 36-2-14-19

Cornea donations

Sec. 19. (a) As used in this section, "cornea" includes corneal tissue.

(b) As used in this section, "decedent" means a person described in section 6(a)(1) through 6(a)(5) of this chapter.

(c) As used in this section, "eye bank" means a nonprofit corporation:

- (1) organized under Indiana law;
- (2) exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code; and

(3) whose purposes include obtaining, storing, and distributing corneas that are to be used for corneal transplants or for other medical or medical research purposes.

(d) If under section 6(d) of this chapter the coroner requires an autopsy to be performed upon a decedent, the coroner may authorize the removal of one (1) or both of the decedent's corneas for donation to an eye bank for transplantation, if the following conditions exist:

(1) The decedent's corneas are not necessary for successful completion of the autopsy.

(2) The decedent's corneas are not necessary for use as evidence.

(3) Removal of the decedent's corneas will not alter the postmortem facial appearance of the decedent.

(4) A representative of the eye bank, authorized by the trustees of the eye bank to make requests for corneas, has done the following:

(A) Within six (6) hours after the time of death, made a reasonable attempt to:

(i) contact any of the persons listed in the order of priority specified in IC 29-2-16.1-8; and

(ii) inform the person of the effect of the removal of the decedent's corneas on the physical appearance of the decedent.

(B) Submitted to the coroner:

(i) a written request for the donation by the coroner of corneas of the decedent subject to autopsy under section 6(d) of this chapter; and

(ii) a written certification that corneas donated under this section are intended to be used only for cornea transplant.

(5) The removal of the corneas and their donation to the eye bank will not alter a gift made by:

(A) the decedent when alive; or

(B) any of the persons listed in the order of priority specified in IC 29-2-16.1-8;

to an agency or organization other than the eye bank making the request for the donation.

(6) The coroner, at the time the removal and donation of a decedent's corneas is authorized, does not know of any objection to the removal and donation of the decedent's corneas made by:

(A) the decedent, as evidenced in a written document executed by the decedent when alive; or

(B) any of the persons listed in the order of priority specified in IC 29-2-16.1-8.

(e) A person, including a coroner and an eye bank and the eye bank's representatives, who exercises reasonable care in complying with subsection (d)(6) is immune from civil liability arising from cornea removal and donation allowed under this section.

(f) A person who authorizes the donation of a decedent's corneas may not be charged for the costs related to the donation. The recipient of the donation is responsible for the costs related to the donation.

As added by P.L.36-1993, SEC.6. Amended by P.L.147-2007, SEC.19.

IC 36-2-14-20

Billing counties for costs of autopsies

Sec. 20. (a) As used in this section, "autopsy" means the external and surgical internal examination of all body systems of a decedent, including toxicology and histology.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (b) and IC 4-24-4-1, if an Indiana resident:

- (1) dies in an Indiana county as a result of an incident that occurred in another Indiana county; and
- (2) is the subject of an autopsy performed under the authority and duties of the county coroner of the county where the death occurred;

the county coroner shall bill the county in which the incident occurred for the cost of the autopsy, including the physician fee under section 6(d) of this chapter.

(c) Except as provided in subsection (b) and IC 4-24-4-1, payment for the costs of an autopsy requested by a party other than the:

- (1) county prosecutor; or
- (2) county coroner;

of the county in which the individual died must be made by the party requesting the autopsy.

(d) This section does not preclude the coroner of a county in which a death occurs from attempting to recover autopsy costs from the jurisdiction outside Indiana where the incident that caused the death occurred.

As added by P.L.271-2001, SEC.6. Amended by P.L.67-2003, SEC.1; P.L.225-2007, SEC.18.

IC 36-2-14-21

Coroners obtaining decedent's health records; coroners provide health records to investigative units

Sec. 21. (a) As used in this section, "health records" means written, electronic, or printed information possessed by a provider concerning any diagnosis, treatment, or prognosis of the patient. The term includes mental health records, alcohol and drug abuse records, and emergency ambulance service records.

(b) As used in this section, "provider" has the meaning set forth in IC 16-18-2-295(b).

(c) As part of a medical examination or autopsy conducted under this chapter, a coroner may obtain a copy of the decedent's health records.

(d) Except as provided in subsection (e), health records obtained under this section are confidential.

(e) The coroner may provide the health records of a decedent that were obtained under this section to a prosecuting attorney or law enforcement agency that is investigating the individual's death. Health records received from a coroner under this subsection are

confidential.

(f) A person who receives confidential records or information under this section and knowingly or intentionally discloses the records or information to an unauthorized person commits a Class A misdemeanor.

As added by P.L.28-2002, SEC.3. Amended by P.L.1-2007, SEC.240.

IC 36-2-14-22

Providing climate controlled environment

Sec. 22. A coroner shall exercise reasonable care in providing a climate controlled environment for the purpose of retarding decomposition of a human body in the coroner's custody.

As added by P.L.58-2007, SEC.1.

IC 36-2-14-22.1

Coroner requests to hospitals for blood or tissue samples

Sec. 22.1. (a) Upon the request of a coroner who is conducting or will conduct a death investigation on an individual who is admitted or was admitted to a hospital, the hospital shall provide a sample of the individual's blood or tissue to the coroner.

(b) A coroner does not need to obtain a warrant to request a blood or tissue sample under this section.

As added by P.L.225-2007, SEC.19.

IC 36-2-14-22.2

Repealed

(Repealed by P.L.3-2008, SEC.269.)

IC 36-2-14-22.3

Training courses for coroners and deputy coroners

Sec. 22.3. (a) The coroners training board established by IC 4-23-6.5-3, in consultation with the Indiana law enforcement academy, shall create and offer a training course for coroners and deputy coroners. The training course must include:

- (1) at least forty (40) hours of instruction; and
- (2) instruction regarding:
 - (A) death investigation;
 - (B) crime scenes; and
 - (C) preservation of evidence at a crime scene for police and crime lab technicians.

(b) The coroners training board, in consultation with the Indiana law enforcement academy, shall create and offer an annual training course for coroners and deputy coroners. The annual training course must:

- (1) include at least eight (8) hours of instruction; and
- (2) cover recent developments in:
 - (A) death investigation;
 - (B) crime scenes; and
 - (C) preservation of evidence at a crime scene for police and crime lab technicians.

(c) In creating the courses under subsections (a) and (b), the coroners training board shall consult with a pathologist certified by the American Board of Pathology regarding medical issues that are a part of the training courses.

(d) All training in the courses offered under subsections (a) and (b) that involves medical issues must be approved by a pathologist certified by the American Board of Pathology.

(e) All training in the courses offered under subsections (a) and (b) that involves crime scenes and evidence preservation must be approved by a law enforcement officer.

(f) The coroners training board shall issue a coroner or deputy coroner a certificate upon successful completion of the courses described in subsections (a) and (b).

As added by P.L.3-2008, SEC.258.

IC 36-2-14-22.4

Organ and tissue procurement

Sec. 22.4. A coroner shall follow the procedures set forth in IC 29-2-16.1 concerning organ and tissue procurement.

As added by P.L.3-2008, SEC.259.

IC 36-2-14-22.6

Information requests; medicolegal examinations; interference with postmortem examinations; denial of recovery

Sec. 22.6. (a) Upon request of a procurement organization, a coroner shall release to the procurement organization the name, contact information, and available medical and social history of a decedent whose body is under the jurisdiction of the coroner. If the decedent's body or part is medically suitable for transplantation, therapy, research, or education, the coroner shall release postmortem examination results to the procurement organization. The procurement organization may make a subsequent disclosure of the postmortem examination results or other information received from the coroner only if relevant to transplantation or therapy.

(b) The coroner may conduct a medicolegal examination by reviewing all medical records, laboratory test results, x-rays, other diagnostic results, and other information that any person possesses about a donor or prospective donor whose body is under the jurisdiction of the coroner which the coroner determines may be relevant to the investigation.

(c) A person that has any information requested by a coroner under subsection (b) shall provide that information as expeditiously as possible to allow the coroner to conduct the medicolegal investigation within a period compatible with the preservation of parts for the purpose of transplantation, therapy, research, or education.

(d) If an anatomical gift has been or might be made of a part of a decedent whose body is under the jurisdiction of the coroner and a postmortem examination is not required, or the coroner determines that a postmortem examination is required but that the recovery of the

part that is the subject of an anatomical gift will not interfere with the examination, the coroner and procurement organization shall cooperate in the timely removal of the part from the decedent for the purpose of transplantation, therapy, research, or education.

(e) If an anatomical gift of a part from the decedent under the jurisdiction of the coroner has been or might be made, but the coroner, in consultation with a pathologist, initially believes that the recovery of the part could interfere with the postmortem investigation into the decedent's cause or manner of death or interfere with the preservation or collection of evidence, the coroner and pathologist shall consult with the procurement organization or physician or technician designated by the procurement organization about the proposed recovery. After consultation, the coroner may allow the recovery, delay the recovery, or deny the recovery.

(f) Before the removal procedure, the coroner or designee may allow recovery by the procurement organization to proceed, or, if the coroner or designee reasonably believes that the part may be involved in determining the decedent's cause or manner of death or, in tissue procurement cases, if the coroner or designee determines that, for evidentiary purposes, the body must remain undisturbed prior to autopsy, deny recovery by the procurement organization. The coroner or designee must be present at the scene before denying the recovery of a part. When practicable, the coroner and pathologist shall work with the procurement organization to facilitate removal of a part following any postmortem examination of the decedent.

(g) If the coroner or designee denies recovery under subsection (e) or (f), the coroner or designee shall:

- (1) explain in a record the specific reasons for not allowing recovery of the part;
- (2) include the specific reasons in the records of the coroner and forensic pathologist; and
- (3) provide a record with the specific reasons to the procurement organization and the state department of health.

(h) If the coroner or designee allows recovery of a part under subsection (d), (e), or (f), the procurement organization shall do the following:

- (1) At the request of the coroner or designee and when practicable, perform diagnostic studies that would aid in documenting the presence or absence of injuries.
- (2) Cause the physician or technician who removes the part to explain in a signed record the condition of the part, including the presence or absence of any injuries to the part or any surrounding tissue or organs.
- (3) Provide a copy of the record described in subdivision (2) to the coroner and the investigating law enforcement agency.
- (4) Cause the physician or technician who removes the part to photograph, collect, preserve, and maintain the appropriate chain of custody of any evidence that is found during procurement.
- (5) Cause the physician or technician who removes the part to

collect blood and other bodily fluid samples as directed by the coroner or designee.

(6) Cause the physician or technician who removes the part to, upon the request of the coroner or designee, photograph, biopsy, or provide any other information and observations concerning the part or body that would assist in the postmortem examination.

(i) If a coroner or designee must:

- (1) be present at a removal procedure under subsection (f); or
- (2) perform duties at times other than those that are usual and customary for the coroner or designee to maximize tissue or eye recovery under IC 29-2-16.1-21(b);

at the request of the coroner or designee, the procurement organization that requested the recovery of the part shall reimburse the coroner or designee for the additional costs incurred by the coroner or designee to comply with subsection (f) or IC 29-2-16.1-21(b).

As added by P.L.147-2007, SEC.20.

IC 36-2-14-23

Requirement that coroner and deputy coroner complete course; auditor to withhold pay if course not timely completed; withheld pay released upon successful completion of course; exception

Sec. 23. (a) Each coroner shall successfully complete the training course offered under section 22.3(a) of this chapter within six (6) months after taking office.

(b) Each deputy coroner shall successfully complete the training course offered under section 22.3(a) of this chapter within one (1) year after beginning employment with a coroner's office.

(c) Each coroner and each deputy coroner shall successfully complete the annual training course offered under section 22.3(b) of this chapter each year after the year in which the coroner or deputy coroner received the training required by section 22.3(a) of this chapter.

(d) After a coroner or deputy coroner has:

- (1) successfully completed the training course as required under subsection (a) or (b); and
- (2) successfully completed the annual training course as required under subsection (c);

the coroner or deputy coroner shall present a certificate or other evidence to the county executive, or in the case of a county that contains a consolidated city, the city-county council, that the coroner or deputy coroner has successfully completed the training required under subsection (a), (b), or (c).

(e) If a coroner or deputy coroner does not present a certificate or other evidence to the county executive, or in the case of a county that contains a consolidated city, the city-county council, that the coroner or deputy coroner has successfully completed the training required under subsection (a), (b), or (c), the county executive or city-county council shall order the auditor to withhold the paycheck of the

coroner or deputy coroner until the coroner or deputy coroner satisfies the respective training requirements under subsections (a), (b), and (c), unless the county executive or city-county council adopts a resolution finding that:

(1) the failure of the coroner or deputy coroner to complete the respective training requirements under subsections (a), (b), and (c) is the result of unusual circumstances;

(2) the coroner or deputy coroner is making reasonable progress, under the circumstances, toward completing the respective training requirements under subsections (a), (b), and (c); and

(3) in light of the unusual circumstances described in subdivision (1), withholding the paycheck of the coroner or deputy coroner would be unjust.

(f) If the county executive or city-county council orders an auditor to withhold a paycheck under subsection (e) and a coroner or deputy coroner later presents a certificate or other evidence to the county executive or city-county council that the coroner or deputy coroner has successfully completed training required under subsection (a), (b), or (c), the county executive or city-county council shall order the auditor to release all of the coroner's or deputy coroner's paychecks that were withheld from the coroner or deputy coroner.

As added by P.L.157-2007, SEC.7. Amended by P.L.3-2008, SEC.260.

IC 36-2-14-24

Requirement for the release of autopsy and other reports; auditor to withhold pay if autopsy or other reports not timely released; withheld pay released upon release of autopsy or other reports; exception

Sec. 24. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), if a coroner does not release a written report required under section 10 of this chapter or a full copy of an autopsy report required under section 18 of this chapter as required by law, the county executive, or in the case of a county containing a consolidated city, the city-county council, shall order the auditor to withhold the paycheck of the coroner until the coroner properly releases the written report or full autopsy report, unless the county executive or city-county council adopts a resolution finding that:

(1) the failure of the coroner or deputy coroner to release the written report or full autopsy report is the result of unusual circumstances;

(2) the coroner or deputy coroner is making reasonable progress, under the circumstances, toward completing and releasing the written report or full autopsy report; and

(3) in light of the unusual circumstances described in subdivision (1), withholding the paycheck of the coroner or deputy coroner would be unjust.

(b) A county auditor may not withhold the paycheck of a coroner if a coroner is legally prohibited from releasing a written report or from releasing a full autopsy report. However, a coroner is required

to release a written report or full autopsy report as soon as possible after the legal prohibition on releasing the written report or full autopsy report ceases to exist.

(c) If the county executive or city-county council orders an auditor to withhold a paycheck under subsection (a) and a coroner properly releases the written report or full autopsy report, the county executive or city-county council shall order the auditor to release all of the coroner's paychecks that were withheld from the coroner.

As added by P.L.157-2007, SEC.8.