

# ISO/IEC 17020

## 5.1 Administrative Requirements

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5.1.1 The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office is a department of Spokane County, a governmental agency. As such, the office is a governmental entity, and is held legally responsible for all inspection activities.

5.1.2 The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office is a department in Spokane County government. Spokane County itself is responsible for multiple government functions as specified by law including roads, Sheriff, prosecution, elections, courts, building permits, etc. The Medical Examiner's Office is a distinct and separate department, and is separately located some miles from the main county campus. The medical examiners and medical examiner office manager are directly supervised by the appointed County Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is appointed and supervised by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). (Organization Chart for Spokane County Attached.)

5.1.3 Washington State RCW 68.50.010 legally establishes the Coroner's (Medical Examiner's) jurisdiction over remains in a broad set of circumstances. Competencies are further verified by NAME accreditation and by **Resolution 98 0665** of the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners.

Inspection activities for which the Spokane Medical Examiner's Office is competent:

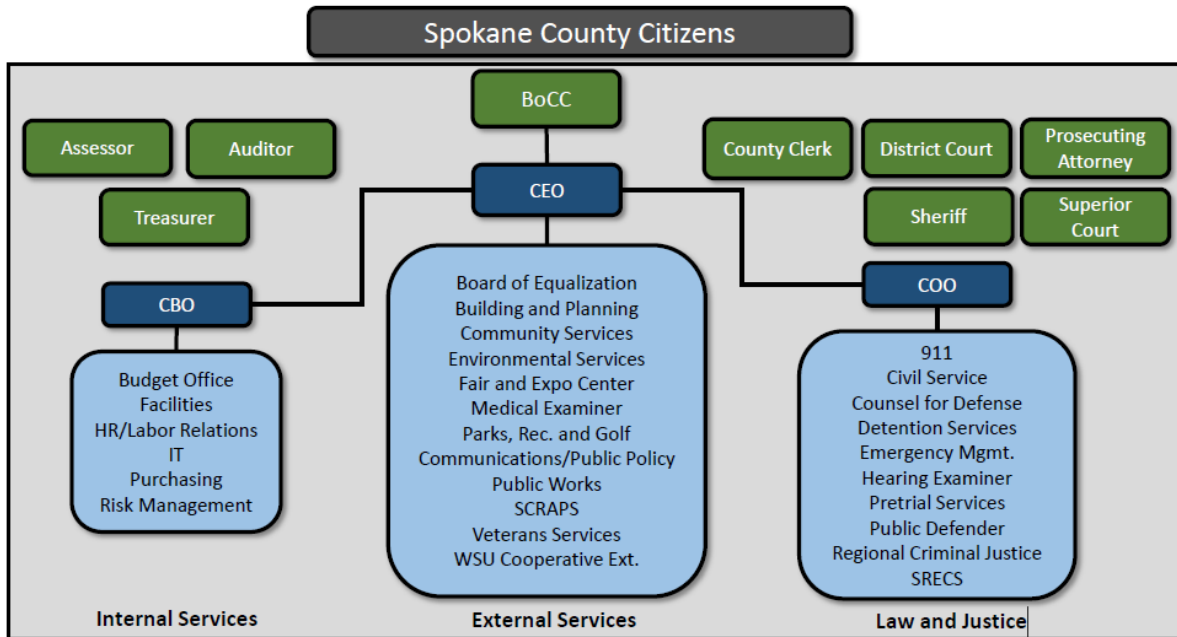
1. Performing autopsies and documenting via autopsy reports
2. Assuming jurisdiction in deaths, as required by law
3. Transporting decedents for examination and storage
4. Proper storage of bodies
5. Release of bodies as prescribed by legal next-of-kin
6. Generating statistics regarding deaths in Spokane County
7. Ordering and interpreting toxicology and other ancillary tests as required by professional judgment
8. Maintaining chain of custody of evidence
9. Death scene investigations and reports
10. Inventorying, safeguarding, and releasing decedent personal property
11. Administering the county indigent fund
12. May perform inquests
13. Maintaining confidentiality
14. Orientation, training, and continuous education of death investigators and other staff

15. Recognizing and collecting evidence
16. Photographic documentation of death scenes and postmortem examination
17. Determining the cause and manner of death on the death certificate and completing other prescribed portions of the death certificate
18. Providing expert court testimony
19. Maintaining and archiving records related to all above competencies

5.1.4 The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office is a department of a legal entity, Spokane County. Spokane County is self-insured and is a member of the Washington State County Risk Pool. (The risk pool is a Joint Self-insurance liability program.) Documentation of adequate insurance is attached. (See Certificate of Membership in the Washington Counties Risk Pool MLC. Number: 20172018RISKPOOL.SPCO)

5.1.5. The primary functions of the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office is to perform inspections (autopsies) for Spokane County, the legal entity of which it is a part. However, the office also performs autopsies for other counties in Idaho and Washington on a referral basis. These autopsies are performed based on signed "Agreements for Medical Examiner Services" with each referral county, and the relationship is further defined by the Spokane County Medical Examiner Policy: **Procedures in Outside County Cases.**

## 2017-18 Spokane County Organization Chart



## **5.2 Organization and Management (to include 5.2.1 through 5.2.7)**

**5.2.1, 5.2.4** The Knox County Regional Forensic Center (KCRFC) is an independent County agency as provided under TCA § 38-7-104, § 38-7-108, and § 38-7-109. The KCRFC is a free-standing county agency, and is not a unit of another agency that provides forensic services. The attached organizational chart demonstrates the relationship of the KCRFC with Knox County Government. The KCRFC is an independent agency and is structured to safeguard impartiality and protect against undue influence from outside agencies. All employees of the KCRFC are employees of Knox County government.

The Knox County Government Employee Handbook (pgs. 8-11) establishes a code of ethics for all county employees, which allows for impartiality in functions of the KCRFC. Employees are required to sign documentation that the Employee Handbook has been reviewed at hiring and on an annual basis thereafter. The Knox County Government's policy is "to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all employees and officials, whether elected or appointed. Accordingly, all County employees should maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants; and never use their County position or powers for improper personal gain." In addition, the Employee Handbook clarified a code of ethical conduct, a duty to report any direct or indirect knowledge of any suspected illegal, improper, wasteful or fraudulent activity, an admonition against conflicts of interest, and rules for secondary employment. In addition, the Knox County Forensic Center policy 2.4 addresses the issue of employees with outside employment and expectations for maintaining impartiality in outside employment.

**5.2.2-5.2.3** This organization's responsibilities include investigation of deaths due to suspicious, unnatural, or unusual circumstances TCA § 38-7-108. It is the duty of the county medical examiner to immediately make an investigation of the circumstances of the death, record and store the findings, and transmit copies of the findings to the Tennessee medical advisory council. The county medical examiner may perform an autopsy or shall designate and authorize a pathologist to perform the autopsy. The attached organizational chart establishes the management and administration that allows the KCRFC to perform its forensic activities of death investigation and forensic pathology.

**5.2.5-5.2.7** The KCRFC maintains job descriptions for all position categories within the organization. The table of organization and job descriptions include a technical manager who has the overall responsibility to ensure that the inspection activities are carried out in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020. The job descriptions, including specific authorities, are attached.