



LUBBOCK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER

Charles Addington, D.O.
Chief Administrative Medical Examiner

RETENTION POLICY

Toxicology Specimens

Retention Period for toxicology specimens is based on death classification and begins on the day of autopsy or examination.

- I. Deaths classified as Suicides and Undetermined: Four (4) years.
- II. All other deaths: Two (2) years.

Formalin-fixed Wet Tissue, Microscopic Slides and Paraffin-embedded Tissue

Retention period for formalin-fixed wet tissue, microscopic slides and paraffin blocks is based on accreditation standards established by National Association of Medical Examiners and begins on the day of autopsy or examination.

- I. Microscopic slides; Indefinitely
- II. Paraffin-embedded tissues; Ten (10) years
- III. Formalin-fixed wet tissue: Two (2) years

****Specimens will be discarded after the retention period unless a hold is requested in writing by certified mail. Requestor will be charged a yearly storage fee that will need to be renewed ever year the hold is needed. If renewal letter is not received at the end of that year, specimens will be discarded.****

Inquest/Autopsy Case Files

Investigative reports by medical examiner, pathologists, or investigators; autopsy reports; toxicology, histology, and similar laboratory reports supportive of an autopsy or used as the basis for determining a cause of death; any affidavits taken during investigation; and copies of death certificates.

- I. Records are kept Indefinitely
- II. Photos: As long as administratively valuable, with the exception being Homicides, Suicides, Undetermined Cases, and any other criminal cases
- III. Funeral home releases; reports of death; copies of cremation certificates; personal effects inventories; reports from law enforcement agencies, physicians, funeral homes, and hospitals; correspondence, subpoenas and other court-issued process; copies of injury reports submitted to the Texas Department of Health; and similar documents relating to an inquest investigation: As long as administratively valuable
- IV. Notices of and documentation concerning organ removal for transplant purposes: Three (3) years

Inquest/Autopsy Logs

Logs or lists of deaths investigated and/or autopsies performed.

- I. Indefinitely

Medical Examiner Register

Registers or log sheets recording the arrival and removal of bodies from the Medical Examiner's Office

- I. As long as administratively valuable