

Postmortem X-Rays and Equipment

1139.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In conjunction with a postmortem examination, postmortem x-rays can be a valuable tool to assist in determination of the cause and manner of death, location of forensic evidence, or identification of a decedent. This policy establishes rules and guidelines for those deaths requiring postmortem x-rays, and the proper use of x-ray equipment.

1139.2 DEATHS REQUIRING FULL BODY X-RAY

All decedents falling into one of the following categories, shall receive full body x-rays prior to autopsy examination:

- (a) Homicide deaths;
- (b) Officer Involved deaths;
- (c) In-custody deaths;
- (d) Children, age 7 and under;
- (e) Fetuses, when obvious maternal trauma is involved;
- (f) Pedestrian vs. auto deaths, when hit and run is known or suspected
- (g) Decedents that remain unidentified at the time of autopsy
 - 1. Dental x-rays shall be included
- (h) At the request of the Coroner's pathologist

1139.3 X-RAY RETENTION

All x-rays, both full body and dental, performed at the Coroner Division shall be retained indefinitely.

1139.4 USE OF X-RAY EQUIPMENT

The Senior Coroner Technician shall ensure that all members of the Forensics Unit adhere to all applicable safety guidelines set forth by the California Department of Public Health and Radiologic Health Branch.

X-rays shall be performed only by members of the Forensics Unit. The operator shall be responsible for clearing the x-ray room of non-essential persons prior to and during the taking of x-rays. The operator shall be positioned behind the protective wall at all times while x-ray equipment is in use. No person(s) shall hold or be used to hold the remains or specimens being x-rayed. Any apparent malfunction of the x-ray equipment shall be immediately reported to a Senior Coroner Technician.

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department

Orange County SD Policy Manual

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1139.5 PERSONAL MONITORING DEVICES

Personal monitoring devices shall be worn at all times while operating the x-ray equipment. Dose monitoring records shall be recorded in the designated log book, and made available for review by the Department of Health Services upon request. Any report indicating potential overexposure shall be reported to the Department of Health Services immediately.