
Handling of Bone/Tissue Specimens

1152.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Bones, tissues, and other specimens are commonly collected by or delivered to Coroner Division personnel by law enforcement officers, medical professionals, or members of the public. This policy serves to establish rules and guidelines for the handling of these specimens.

1152.2 DEFINITIONS

- (a) Specimen: Bones, tissues, organs, products of conception, and human remains of no forensic value
- (b) Forensic Value: Human remains or portions thereof that show evidence of a modern murder or evidence necessary to determine the cause or manner of death, or identity of a deceased person.
- (c) Human remains: The body of a deceased person, or portion thereof.

1152.3 FIELD RESPONSES AND TRANSPORTING OF BONE/TISSUE SPECIMENS

Deputy Coroners receiving report of a bone or tissue specimen found in the field is not required to respond to the scene when there are no reports of additional evidence in close proximity to the specimen, and collection of the specimen by the finder or reporting law enforcement agency will not result in loss or destruction of the specimen. Deputy Coroners may direct the finder or reporting law enforcement agency to instead collect the specimen and deliver it to the Coroner Division Facility for examination.

If the finder or reporting law enforcement agency reports multiple specimens and/or skeletal remains located in or near a potential gravesite, Deputy Coroners shall conduct a field response. Any reports of specimens found under suspicious circumstances shall also require a field response by the Deputy Coroner. The remains may be transported by Deputy Coroners in the trunk of the Deputy Coroner's vehicle, so long as he/she can properly secure the item in a sealed bag or an appropriate spill proof container.

All bone or tissue specimens in this policy section shall be documented in CME as a Coroner Case. The assigned manner shall be determined based on known case circumstances.

1152.4 NON-HUMAN REMAINS

Any remains determined to be non-human by Deputy Coroners need not be documented nor transported to the Coroner Division Facility. Any remains where the potential of human origin cannot be ruled out shall be documented in CME with the assigned manner of "Jurisdictional Inquiry" and transported to the Coroner Division Facility for examination by the Forensic Pathologist and/or Forensic Anthropologist.

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department

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1152.5 HUMAN REMAINS OF NO FORENSIC VALUE

Any remains thought to be human but of no forensic value (example: educational displays, war relics, museum collections, etc.) shall be documented in CME by the Deputy Coroner and assigned a manner of "Jurisdictional Inquiry." The remains shall be photographed and delivered to the Forensics Unit for examination by the Forensic Pathologist and/or Forensic Anthropologist.

1152.6 HUMAN REMAINS WITH FORENSIC VALUE

If at any point a Deputy Coroner, Forensic Pathologist, or Forensic Anthropologist determine remains to be human and have some forensic value, the remains shall be handled in accordance with Policy 1117 of this manual.