

SNOHOMISH COUNTY INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

INTERN – MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATIONS INTERN

Spec No. 9204

SNOHOMISH COUNTY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Snohomish County supports internship programs that provide work experience for students in an accredited post-secondary institution that is related to their course of study. The internship program is designed so that the student will have the opportunity to apply principles and theories learned in the classroom, gain new skills, explore a career path and be supervised and mentored by a professional in their field.

BASIC FUNCTION

The responsibilities of this internship include learning various forensic death investigation tasks to develop skills required to perform the duties of a Medical Investigator under the direction of the Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) staff. The incumbent will learn, practice, and assist with forensic investigations of deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office, as well as assist the pathologist during examinations.

STATEMENT OF ESSENTIAL INTERNSHIP DUTIES

In a learning capacity, and under direct supervision:

1. Receives notification of deaths from law enforcement and medical facilities, and determines jurisdiction based upon the Medical Examiner's Office standard guidelines.
2. Identifies, collects, documents, and safeguards the legal chain of custody of evidentiary materials and decedent's personal property at death scenes.
3. Answers phone calls, performs data entry and routine office functions, and works with bereaved families with respect and compassion.
4. Writes complete, accurate, and comprehensive investigative reports, describing the scene and circumstances of death to assist the Medical Examiner (pathologist) in the determination of the cause and manner of death.
5. Responds to investigate death; photographs the scene and decedent; conducts visual inspection and preliminary examination of the decedent and makes notes of the condition of the body; collects and reviews medical records/police reports and demographic information that is pertinent to the cause and manner of death.
6. Gathers, secures, and transports human remains.
7. Locates and notifies next-of-kin regarding MEO procedures; collects, secures, and releases personal property to the next-of-kin; releases human remains to funeral homes.

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STATEMENT OF ESSENTIAL INTERNSHIP DUTIES (Continued)

8. Establishes and/or initiates positive identification process using photo identification, dental/skeletal radiographs, fingerprints, and medical records.
9. Locates and collects lab samples and records, including health care, police, and other records.
10. Assists autopsy staff with autopsy preparations, which includes assisting in holding and moving bodies for photography, photographic evidence, provide radiographic assistance including imaging, developing and data base storage, assisting in the preparation of bodies for funeral homes, and drawing/labeling samples for toxicology.
11. Performs general sanitation and housekeeping duties in the examination room, refrigeration areas, and body receiving and release areas.

STATEMENT OF OTHER INTERNSHIP DUTIES

12. Perform related duties as required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Must be able to show proof of enrollment in an accredited post-secondary institution at the time of the Internship. If the Internship occurs during the summer, the student may either provide proof of summer or fall enrollment.

Must be at least 21-years of age. Must be a Junior, Senior, or graduate standing, with a minimum 3.0 GPA, and currently working towards a degree in criminal justice, biological sciences, anthropology, or closely related fields of study.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Working towards a degree in Forensic Science, and has successfully completed any of the following courses: Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Forensics Practicum, Crime Scene and Medico-legal Death Investigation, and/or Forensic Anthropology.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Must obtain academic credit for the entirety of the internship.
- Ability to deal with death and trauma on an ongoing and daily basis.

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NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

- Required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to maintain confidentiality of all information in the course of the Internship, including but not limiting to medical, financial, investigative, or other sensitive information and as required by law.
- Required to successfully pass a background check, including a criminal record background check.
- Required to pass a drug test, medical evaluation, and physical fitness for duty test (must be able to lift and maneuver human remains weighing up to 175 lbs).

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

Increase Intern Knowledge of:

- basic knowledge of medical terminology, including the principles of human anatomy, and physiological functions of the human body
- autopsy techniques including basic evisceration, toxicology specimen collection, and basic radiography
- basic knowledge of crime scene investigation, processing and evidence collection techniques
- blood/airborne pathogens and universal precautions for personal safety
- basic photographic techniques, including digital photography
- investigative/medical interview techniques
- strong basic computer skills, along with basic knowledge of standard office equipment that may include automated systems, copier, fax machines, and telephones
- telephone, office, and online etiquette

Increase Intern Ability to:

- communicate and work effectively, both orally and in writing, in a multicultural workforce serving a diverse population, in potentially stressful or emotional charged situations
- prepare accurate, complete, and concise reports and narrative sections
- read, understand, and gather pertinent information from medical records and other documentation
- prioritize and resolve problems
- exercise initiative and judgment and make decisions within the scope of assigned responsibility
- use general and specialized databases to determine and contact next-of-kin
- establish and maintain effective work relationships with public and private officials, co-workers, associates, the news media, and the general public
- work with bodies exhibiting various degrees of decay, mutilation, infestation, and disease (including communicable disease such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and AIDS)
- explain procedures and technical terminology to lay people

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KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES (Continued)

- maintain the confidentiality and integrity of information
- remain objective, nonjudgmental, and sensitive to the situation; conducting business in a professional, supportive manner

SUPERVISION

Interns will receive direction from Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office personnel as assigned. The student will be assigned duties indicating generally what is to be done, the quantity of work expected, and any deadlines which are required to be met.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The work involves field trips to the scene of death and exposure to decomposed bodies, contagious disease, and other biological and environmental hazards. The intern may assist in death investigations at the scene of accidents, natural and man-made disasters, and in remote locations. Autopsy and laboratory work is performed in the county morgue and requires the use of needles and surgical instruments. Paperwork is performed in a normal office environment.

Snohomish County is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer.
Accommodations for individuals with disabilities are provided upon request.

[EEO policy and ADA notice](#)

Class Established: May 2016

EEO Category: 5 - Paraprofessionals

Intern Wage: Unpaid

Workers Comp: Not covered. The school authorizing the internship is responsible for coverage.