

SNOHOMISH COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT, SENIOR

Spec No. 4092

BASIC FUNCTION

To assist pathologist with and participate in postmortem exams, assuming technical responsibility for histology, cytology, radiology, photography and property and evidence collection. Reviews subordinate work to ensure accuracy, completeness and compliance with established procedures. Serves as the pathology division liaison between Information Services, Facilities, laboratories and other service providers, law enforcement and contract agencies.

STATEMENT OF ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

1. Under the direction of the Medical Examiner, reviews, monitors and schedules the work of assigned staff; provides day-to-day coaching and on-the-job training for work performance, work quality and efficiency; provides input to management for performance reviews.
2. Prepares room for autopsy; selects instruments; sets up scale and specimen containers; assists in clean-up of room, instruments, equipment and containers, and assists in the preparation of the documentation of medical therapy on body diagram.
3. Prepares body for autopsy; weighs and measures body; incises body and assists in removal of organs for pathological examination; incises skull and removes brain; places body tissue in container for further analysis; prepares and restores organs to body; sutures and cleans body for release; assists in obtaining samples for toxicological analysis.
4. Prepares specimens for storage and shipping; ensures proper labeling throughout histological process; stores autopsy specimens for future reference; maintains records of work performed. Responsible for periodic audits and destruction.
5. Maintains inventory and prepares requisition forms to replenish autopsy supplies.
6. Responsible for the quality control of digital imaging files.
7. Assumes responsibility for evidence and personal property gathering, security and transfer to appropriate agencies as necessary.
8. Answers phones, performs routine office functions, releases human remains to funeral homes, and may be required to give testimony in court.
9. Assists in development and implementation of policies and procedures.
10. Assists in mass fatality planning and associated activities.

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STATEMENT OF OTHER JOB DUTIES

1. Performs other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor of Science degree in medicine or clinical pathology, or which includes classes in chemistry, biology, anatomy, and/or physiology AND two (2) years experience as an autopsy assistant, including experience with photography, x-ray and digital imaging. OR, any equivalent combination of training and/or experience that provides the required knowledge and abilities.

Training and experience as a surgical technician, military medical aide, nurse, or related medical position may be substituted for up to six (6) months of the experience as an autopsy assistant. Must pass job related tests.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Graduation from an accredited pathology assistant program is preferred.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of a valid Washington State driver's license, unrestricted except as to vision, is required at the time of, or within 15 days of appointment. Required to successfully pass a background investigation, to include criminal record background check and fingerprinting. Also required to pass a drug test, medical evaluation, physical fitness for duty test, and psychological test. Required to carry an employer-issued cell phone and/or personal pager both while on and off shift for contact and communication.

Required to work as a team member and must be able to independently utilize strong decision making and critical thinking skills that are within the scope of this position.

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- blood/airborne pathogens and universal precautions for personnel safety;
- basic photographic techniques;
- histological and cytologic theory, techniques and procedures;
- proper practices in the care and operation of assigned equipment;
- human anatomy;
- chemistry and biology as applied to pathology;
- criminal investigation and identification procedures;
- appropriate procedures for handling contaminated or infectious specimens or bodies;

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- assigned computer applications and a variety of software packages, including word processing, spreadsheets, digital imaging and databases;
- general capabilities of desktop and laptop computers and their associated peripheral equipment;
- networking, file sharing, and file transfer capabilities between microcomputers;
- microcomputer and network hardware, modems and telephone equipment;
- microcomputer operating systems (MS-DOS), data storage techniques, directory structures and file formats.

Ability to:

- work on cadavers in various degrees of decay and injury;
- conduct laboratory work independently;
- perform assigned tasks according to prescribed procedures and accurately record observations;
- maintain accurate records and purchase needed supplies;
- learn radiographic techniques;
- understand and apply knowledge of user needs to develop microcomputer applications from existing software;
- operate standard office machines, including microcomputers;
- analyze and resolve operational problems and help others solve problems;
- train others in the use of computer equipment;
- communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with people of varying degrees of technical background; plan and think logically and able to prioritize work;
- work under pressure, cope with interruptions and meet deadlines;
- exercise good judgement as to when to act independently and when to refer situations to higher authority;
- maintain necessary records and documentation and prepare clear, concise guides and other written material;
- read, understand, and apply technical manuals and procedures;
- establish and maintain effective work relationships with superiors, peers, associates, subordinates, public and private officials and the general public.

SUPERVISION

The employee receives general supervision from the Chief Medical Examiner or Associate Medical Examiner. The Medical Examiner is usually available to furnish detailed instructions and guidelines in the event of unusually technical or difficult problems. Work is reviewed through meetings, status reports and results obtained.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The work involves exposure to decomposed bodies, contagious diseases, and other biological hazards. Autopsy and laboratory work is performed in the county morgue and requires

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the use of needles and surgical instruments. Good physical condition is required as the employee may perform unassisted strenuous physical labor associated with the lifting and moving of dead bodies in excess of seventy-five (75) pounds. Paperwork is done in a normal office environment. Employee works evenings, weekends, and/or holidays as required.

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: November 2002
Revised: July 2020, December 2020
EEO Category: 2 – Professionals
Pay Grade: 240 – Classified Pay Plan
Workers Comp: 1501 Hazardous