

SNOHOMISH COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT

Spec No. 4041

BASIC FUNCTION

To assist pathologist with and participate in autopsies, assuming technical responsibility for histology, cytology, radiology, photography and evidence collection.

STATEMENT OF ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

1. 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.
2. Prepares body for autopsy; weighs and measures body; incises body and assists in removal of organs for pathological examination; incises skull and removes brain;; prepares and restores organs to body; sutures and cleans body for release. Assists in obtaining samples for toxicological analysis.
3. Prepares tissues for transportation and storage. Ensures proper labeling throughout histological process; stores autopsy specimens for future reference; maintains records of work performed.
4. Maintains inventory and prepares requisition forms to replenish histology, cytology, and autopsy supplies.
5. Assumes technical responsibility for radiology; ensures film processing; maintains related records and files, and maintains work areas in a safe and sanitary condition.
6. Performs routine identification and specimen photography using digital cameras.
7. Assumes responsibility for medicolegal evidence gathering, security and transfer to appropriate agencies as necessary; provides coverage during emergency situations in the autopsy room.
8. Answers phones, performs routine office functions, releases human remains to funeral homes, and may be required to give testimony in court.

STATEMENT OF OTHER JOB DUTIES

9. Performs related work as required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Must have six (6) months autopsy assistant experience in the area of medicolegal or hospital pathology; AND an Associate's degree with course work in medicine or clinical pathology, chemistry, biology, anatomy, and/or physiology; AND; OR, any equivalent combination of training and/or experience that provides the required knowledge and abilities. Must pass job related tests.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT

Spec No. 4041

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor's degree is preferred.

One (1) year experience as a medicolegal autopsy assistant is preferred.

Photography and radiology training and/or experience is also 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 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, including digital photography
- histological and cytologic theory, techniques and procedures
- proper practices in the care and operation of assigned equipment
- medical terminology and their abbreviations, human anatomy and physiological functions of the human body chemistry and biology as applied to pathology
- criminal investigation and identification procedures
- appropriate procedures for handling contaminated or infectious specimens or bodies
- strong basic computer skills
- telephone, office and online etiquette

Ability to:

- work on human remains in various degrees of decay and mutilation, infestation, and disease (including communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and AIDS)
- conduct laboratory work independently
- perform assigned tasks according to prescribed procedures and accurately record observations
- maintain accurate records and purchase needed supplies
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with superiors, peers, subordinates, associates, public and private officials and the general public
- learn radiographic techniques

SNOHOMISH COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT

Spec No. 4041

PHYSICAL EFFORT

Good physical condition is required as the employee may perform unassisted strenuous physical labor associated with the lifting and moving of human remains in excess of seventy-five (75) pounds.

SUPERVISION

The employee receives general supervision from the Chief Medical Examiner or the Associate Medical Examiner, and works under the leadership of the Medical Investigator III. 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 the use of needles and surgical instruments. Paperwork is done in a normal office environment. The employee may be required to work evenings, weekends, and/or holidays.

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: July 1987
Revised: October 2002; March 2008, November 2017
EEO Category: 2 – Professionals
Pay Grade: 238 – Classified Pay Plan
Workers Comp: 1501 Hazardous

Spec No. 531592