



Walworth County Medical Examiner's Office

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Walworth County Medical Examiner's Office

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**To report a death,
please call:
(262) 741-4401**

Positive Identification

One of the responsibilities of the Medical Examiner's office when investigating a reportable death is to secure positive identification. The process starts with circumstantial evidence found on scene such as a driver's license on the body, prescription medication with the decedent or in the home where found, vehicle registration, etc. Items like these help lead the investigator in the right direction for positive identification. In most cases, the body is identified by the decedent's family or friend either visually on scene or by viewing a photograph taken on scene by ME staff.

One question we are asked on scene is if law enforcement or ME staff can view the decedent's photo identification and make the comparison/identification. The answer? No. Not only are fake IDs a legitimate concern, people can absolutely look alike. Long blonde hair, blue eyes and slight frame can look like 100 other teenage girls. A quick Google search gives evidence to the number of cases where this happens (one 2017 story states: "It was all part of a bigger mix-up that involved a man found dead...a lack of fingerprint records and a mistaken photo I.D.").

Once we have tentative identification, who can make a visual identification or view a photograph taken on scene of the decedent? Preferably the decedent's family or close friend; someone who has known the decedent for a significant amount of time. A landlord or co-worker may also be appropriate. Though rare, law enforcement can also view the decedent or the photograph IF the officer personally knows the decedent through multiple encounters.

What if a decedent is wearing a unique ring, perhaps even engraved with a name believed to be that of the decedent? While that could be a "lead," moveable property can be worn by another person. A person's unique tattoo/mark/scar can be used, provided the family member or friend can describe the tattoo, etc. in detail and knows of the location on the body. After describing the tattoo, visually seeing a photograph of the tattoo taken while on scene or at autopsy is also helpful.

When viewing the body or a photograph is not feasible due to the effects of external factors such as decomposition or extensive injury, other methods of identification are used and can include uniquely numbered surgical implants, fingerprints, dental or body x-ray comparisons and DNA.

Meet the Staff at the Medical Examiner's Office

Before we can officially welcome our two new hires, we must congratulate our two retirees!
As most of you have probably heard, Tom Miller retired in September and Ron Wilson retired at the end of December. We wish them the best of wishes for a long retirement!



Alan Boyes
Deputy Medical Examiner
(Staff member since 2018)

I am a Wisconsin native and after serving in the US Army for 8 years, settled in to the Chicago area. I was a police officer for Lincolnshire, IL for 21 years and retired as the Commander of Operations. I moved back to Wisconsin in 2007 when I accepted the position of Chief of Police for the Village of East Troy. I recently retired as Chief of Police for that department and started as a Deputy Medical Examiner for Walworth County. I live in East Troy with my wife of 25 years. I have three grown children and three dogs. I enjoy traveling and hiking.



Tammy Peterson
Deputy Medical Examiner
(Staff member since 2017)

I am originally from Wautoma in Waushara County. I am married and have 4 children. We live in the Town of Troy. I also work in the Emergency Department at Lakeland as a nurse full time and a Zumba instructor at the Mukwonago Athletic Club. My previous job experiences involved St. Luke's, St. Mary's, St. Nicholas, and a full time Paramedic in Sheboygan. My hobbies include gardening / planting, camping, Girl Scout camp with my daughter and going to Walt Disney World. If we ever get to retire, it will hopefully be in the Smoky Mountains or Montana.

Statistics

Reportable Cases	2017*	2016	2015
Natural	278	211	191
Accident	69	82	67
Fall	30	26	22
Motor Vehicle	20	24	15
Drug / Alcohol	11	19	20
Heroin Related	4	5	6
Opiates (non-heroin)	6	12	11
Other Drugs/Meds	1	2	3
Drowning	2	9	4
Other	6	4	6
Suicide	14	14	17
Gunshot Wound	9	6	8
Hanging	3	5	6
Motor Vehicle	2	0	1
Drug/Alcohol	0	2	1
Other	0	1	1
Homicide	2	3	1
Undetermined	3	5	3
Pending	16	0	0

* pending case closure

Upcoming Training

Join us on Thursday, May 3, 2018
 at the Lake Geneva Police Department
 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. for a *free* training

INVESTIGATION OF DRUG DEATHS

Guest speakers will include Walworth County Associate Medical Examiner Dr. Zeldia Okia and members of the Walworth County Sheriff Investigative Team. Plan on hearing about current trends, area specific statistics and case presentation that walks us through Patrol → Investigation → Drug Unit → Autopsy → Court.