

Reporting In-Custody Deaths

403.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides direction on how in-custody deaths shall be reported.

403.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

INMATE DEATH - Any situation in which a determination of death has been made by competent medical authority.

POSTMORTEM LIVIDITY - Skin discoloration, as from a bruise or venous congestion, occurring or performed after death.

RIGOR MORTIS - A state of hardness and stiffness, as in a muscle, occurring after death.

403.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this office to follow state and local guidelines for reporting in-custody deaths (15 CCR 1046).

403.3 MANDATORY REPORTING

All in-custody deaths shall be reported within 10 days of the death to the state Attorney General's office, in accordance with reporting guidelines and statutory requirements (Government Code § 12525).

If the decedent is a boarder for another agency, the Captain shall notify that agency so that agency will assume responsibility for the notification of the decedent's family.

Pursuant to Article 37 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963, in the case of the death of a foreign national, telephonic notification to the appropriate consulate post should be made without unreasonable delay and confirmatory written notification shall be made within 72 hours of the death to the appropriate consulate post. The notification shall include the inmate's name, identification number, date and time of death, and the attending physician's name.

In the event that a juvenile dies while in custody, the Captain or the authorized designee shall notify the court of jurisdiction and the juvenile offender's parent or guardian (15 CCR 1047). A copy of the report provided to the state Attorney General's office shall be submitted to the Board of State and Community Corrections within 10 days of the death (15 CCR 1046(b)(1)).

403.4 PROCEDURE

When a staff member discovers a possible deceased inmate, the medical unit and the Watch Commander will be notified immediately.

Only medical staff may make a determination of death.

Shasta County Sheriff's Office

Shasta County SO Custody Manual

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Should there be any doubt about death, appropriate emergency life saving measures will be administered and the inmate transported to the hospital (determined by medical staff) for treatment.

In cases where death has already been determined or death is obvious, i.e., post-mortem lividity, rigor mortis, the body will not be disturbed or moved from the scene.

The Watch Commander will immediately notify the Coroner's Division, the Major Crimes Unit, and the Facility Manager.

Staff members at the scene will be responsible for the following:

Isolate and preserve the scene.

Detain, identify, and separate suspects and witnesses.

Release all personal property to the Coroner's Division.

Release copies of documents verifying custody status and identification (remands, commitments, warrants, booking sheet, mug shot, etc.) of the inmate.

The Redding Police Department and DOJ, with the assistance of the Sheriff's Office Major Crimes Unit, and Coroner Division, may jointly conduct the continuing investigation.

The Watch Commander or designee will initiate a crime report and forward it to the Facility Manager.

All medical unit reports will be forwarded to the Watch Commander and/or Coroner's Division.

The Facility Manager will insure a written report is forwarded to the Attorney General's Office within ten days explaining the circumstances of the death.