



King County Medical Examiner's Office

Harborview Medical Center
325 Ninth Avenue, Box 359792
Seattle, WA 98104-2499

206-731-3232 Fax 206-731-8555
TTY Relay: 711

www.kingcounty.gov/health

November 8, 2019

POLICY UPDATE

Dear Funeral Home,

As you may know, the King County Medical Examiner's Office often collects personal effects along with the decedent from the scene of a death investigation requiring families to retrieve the belongings from our office. Due to a determination by the King County Office of the Ombuds, a change is being made to our policy regarding how property is released. Beginning **January 1, 2020**, all property items collected by KCMEO will be released to the family's designated funeral home when the decedent is released into their care. The family can then retrieve the personal effects directly from the funeral home, rather than having to come to KCMEO.

What does this change mean for you?

Upon arriving at KCMEO to pick-up a decedent:

- You will be let into the processing room and met by an investigator who will release the decedent, and a member of the administration team who will release the personal effects, should there be any.
- All property items, including all cash items regardless of their value, will be released to the funeral home representative.
- You will sign a *Property Record Form* accepting the belongings into your care, and will be provided a copy of that signed form.

The new policy will be retroactively applied to any death that occurred in 2019, for which the decedent is being released after January 1, 2020. A signed release letter by the legal next of kin is **no longer required** when picking up personal effects.**

We hope that by giving you enough notice to this policy change, we will have time to address any concerns that you may anticipate. Our goal is to provide a streamlined service that benefits the family, and we hope you can join us in our pursuit. For questions or concerns regarding this new policy, please contact Samantha Barbour at 206-731-3232 ext. 4 or by emailing Samantha.Barbour@kingcounty.gov. Questions via email will be responded to within one business day.

Sincerely,

Samantha Barbour
Property Coordinator

Jesse Chipps
Health Services Administrator

***Note: if your agency is concerned about picking up cash amounts without the families signed permission, you may have the family sign the KCMEO Decedent Cash Release form. However, KCMEO does not require this form be provided to our office.*