

**WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**JOB TITLE:** Medicolegal Death Investigations Intern

**DEPARTMENT:** Coroner

**REPORTS TO:** Coroner and/or Deputy Coroner

**PAY GRADE:** \$14.00 per hour, temporary position, not to exceed 69 hours per month, not to exceed 200 hours

**JOB SUMMARY:** This Intern position will learn various forensic death investigation tasks to develop skills required to perform the duties of a death investigator under the direction of the Coroner's Office staff. The Intern will learn, practice and assist with forensic investigations of deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the Walla Walla County Coroner's Office, as well as assist pathologists during examinations.

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:** N/A

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: In a learning capacity, and under direct supervision:**

- Receive notifications of deaths from law enforcement and medical facilities, and determine jurisdiction based upon the Coroner's Office standard guidelines.
- Identify, collect, document, and safeguard the legal chain of custody of evidentiary materials and decedent's personal property at death scenes.
- Answer phone calls, perform data entry and routine office functions, and work with bereaved families with respect and compassion.
- Write complete, accurate, and comprehensive investigative reports, describing the scene and circumstances of death to assist the pathologist in the determination of the cause and manner of death.
- Responds to investigate death; photographs the scene and decedent; conducts visual inspection and preliminary examination of the decedent and makes notes of the condition of the body; collects and reviews medical records/police reports and demographic information that is pertinent to the cause and manner of death.
- Gather, secure, and transport human remains.
- Locate and notify next-of-kin regarding Coroner's Office procedures; collect, secure and release personal property to the next-of-kin and release human remains to funeral homes.
- Establish and/or initiate positive identification process using photo identification, dental/skeletal radiographs, fingerprints, and medical records.
- Locate and collect lab samples and records, including health care, police, and other records.
- Assist autopsy staff with autopsy preparations, which includes assisting in holding and moving bodies for photography, photographic evidence, provide radiographic assistance including imaging, developing and data base storage, assisting in the preparation of bodies for funeral homes, and drawing/labeling samples for toxicology.

**EXAMPLE OF DUTIES:**

- Communicate and work effectively, both orally and in writing, in a multicultural work force serving a diverse population, in potentially stressful and emotional charged situations.
- Prepare accurate, complete, and concise reports.

- Read, understand, and gather pertinent information from medical records and other documentation.
- Prioritize and resolve problems that may arise.
- Exercise initiative and judgment and make decisions within the scope of assigned responsibility.
- Use general and specialized databases to determine and contact next-of-kin.
- Establish and maintain effective work relationships with public and private officials, coworkers, associates, the news media, and the general public.
- Work with bodies exhibiting various degrees of decay, mutilation, infestation, and disease (including communicable disease such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and AIDS).
- Explain procedures and technical terminology to lay people;
- Maintain the confidentiality and integrity of all information.
- Remain objective, nonjudgmental, and sensitive to the situation; conducting business in a professional manner.

**EQUIPMENT TO BE USED:** Operate a variety of office machines and equipment including computers (PC), scanners, phones, printers and copiers. Use various computer software including the MDILog Case Management System.

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT/ PHYSICAL ABILITIES:** The work involves field trips to the scene of a death and exposure to decomposed bodies, contagious disease, and other biological and environmental hazards. The Intern may assist in death investigations at the scenes of accidents, natural and man-made disasters, and in remote locations. Autopsy and laboratory work performed in the local funeral homes and requires the use of needles and surgical instruments. Paperwork is performed in a normal office environment. Must be able to lift up to twenty (20) pounds, sit and or stand for extended time. Physical abilities required for this position are ones typically related to office operations; manual dexterity and visual acuity to operate personal computers and other office equipment, and sufficient hearing and speech ability to communicate verbally.

**KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES:**

- Basic knowledge of medical terminology, including the principles of human anatomy, and physiological functions of the human body.
- Autopsy techniques including basic evisceration, toxicology specimen collection, and basic radiography.
- Basic knowledge of crime scene investigation, processing and evidence collection techniques.
- Blood/airborne pathogens and universal precautions for personal safety.
- Basic photographic techniques, including digital photography.
- Investigative/medical interview techniques.
- Strong basic computer skills, along with basic knowledge of standard office equipment that may include automated systems, copier, fax machines, and telephones.
- Telephone, office, and online etiquette.

**EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:**

- Must be able to show proof of enrollment in an accredited post-secondary institution at the time of internship. If the internship occurs during the summer, the student may either provide proof of summer or fall enrollment.
- Must be 21 years of age. Must be a Junior, Senior, or graduate standing, with a minimum 3.0 GPA, and currently working towards a degree in criminal justice, biological sciences, anthropology, or a closely related field of study.

- **Preferred:** Working towards a degree in Forensic Science and successful completion any of the following courses: Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Forensics Practicum, Crime Scene and Medico-legal Death Investigation, and/or Forensic Anthropology.

**LICENSES AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS:**

- Ability to deal with death and trauma on an ongoing and daily basis.
- Required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to maintain confidentiality of all information in the course of the internship, including but not limited to medical, financial, investigative, or other sensitive information as required by law.
- Must successfully pass a background check and a driving record check.
- Must dress in a professional manner.

**THIS POSITION DESCRIPTION DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT FOR EMPLOYMENT.**

**To Apply:**

**Send resume and cover letter to:**

**County Coroner's Office  
Attn: Richard Greenwood  
310 W. Poplar St. Suite 2  
Walla Walla, WA 99362**

**Or email to: [rgreenwood@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:rgreenwood@co.walla-walla.wa.us)**