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**NEVADA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



**CORONER'S DIRECTIVE  
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Effective Date 05/30/99**

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**SUBJECT**

**OVERDOSE**

**POLICY**

To provide the investigator with general information in regard to deaths by overdose

**PURPOSE**

To provide the investigator with basic guidelines in the investigation of deaths due to overdose of drugs

**CODE REFERENCE**

**CASE LAW**

**DEFINITIONS**

**PROCEDURE**

- A. In deaths relating to drug overdose or suspected overdose, it is very important to ascertain the type of drug or suspected drug involved. There are a number of important facts which should be ascertained by the investigator when dealing with drug-related deaths. These questions can usually be answered by family members keeping in mind that those close to the decedent may want to cover any drug use or abuse. You may consider checking with the decedent's physician, and in some instances, law enforcement officials.
1. Was the decedent a known drug or narcotic user?
  2. How long was he/she a user?
  3. To what extent (quantity)?
  4. Type of drug or narcotic?
  5. Has the overdose occurred previously? When? Was it intentional or an accident?
- B. Check residence or area for additional drugs and/or narcotics. Check trash for empty containers.
- C. Check for prior convictions, narcotic or drug arrests, or information regarding previous narcotic-related activity.
- D. Attempt to obtain sample of suspected substance.

- E. Attempt to locate, if applicable, injection points. Photograph injection point, and if possible, estimate damage. (Pathologist should be able to answer.)