
**NEVADA COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



**CORONER'S DIRECTIVE
33
Effective Date 05/30/99**

SUBJECT TISSUE AND ORGAN DONATIONS

POLICY This policy applies only to deaths investigated by the Coroner's Unit. It is the policy of the Sheriff-Coroner to cooperate with local organ and tissue procurement agencies, and whenever possible, consent to the harvest of organs or tissues for transplant, therapeutic, or scientific research.

When a potential tissue/organ donor is identified as a coroner's case, a deputy coroner will respond to the hospital, gather information, and take a report. List the time of death as the time when the second physician noted brain death.

PURPOSE To outline the procedures to be followed by Sheriff-Coroner personnel when notified of a potential organ and/or tissue donor

CODE REFERENCE

CASE LAW

DEFINITIONS

PROCEDURE

A. Organ and Tissue Recovery Services

Organ and tissue recovery services recover tissue donations such as eye/cornea, bone, skin, and other tissues as well as kidneys, hearts, livers, pancreas, and lungs.

B. Tissue Donors

1. Potential tissue donors have suffered death and no longer have an intact heartbeat. Personnel from a recovery organization will contact the Sheriff-Coroner's office for authorization to harvest tissue.
2. Consent for tissue donation may be given by a Patrol supervisor or the Coroner supervisor only after obtaining the details of the death, conferring with the investigating officer/agency, and the contract pathologist.
3. Once authorization is received, the procurement coordinator will obtain consent from the decedent's legal next of kin. A copy of the written

consent form will be forwarded to the Coroner supervisor by the recovery organization.

C. Organ Donors

1. Potential organ donors have suffered brain death, are maintained on a ventilator, and have a heartbeat. The legal time of death is the time of the second brain death note written by a physician. **Brain dead patients are legally dead** under the Uniform Determination of Death Act.
2. Consent for organ donation may be given by a Patrol supervisor or the Coroner supervisor only after obtaining the details of the death, conferring with the investigating officer/agency, and the contract pathologist. Once authorization is received from the Sheriff-Coroner office, the procurement coordinator will obtain consent from the decedent's legal next of kin. A copy of the written consent form will be forwarded to the Coroner supervisor by the recovery organization.

D. Criteria

1. The potential donor must be a coroner's case for this office to become involved with the consent procedure.
2. The jurisdiction of the case will be determined, and when appropriate, an investigation conducted regarding the manner of death. In any case, the agency of jurisdiction will be notified that either death or brain death has occurred.
3. If the tissue/organ harvest can occur without jeopardizing the ability of the pathologist to determine a cause of death, consent will usually be given. The Patrol shift supervisor or Coroner supervisor are the only personnel authorized to allow/deny tissue/organ donation.
4. Homicide Victims

Under no circumstances shall consent be given to harvest tissue or organs from a homicide victim without first conferring with appropriate homicide investigators, the Coroner supervisor, the on-call pathologist, the Nevada County District Attorney, and/or the district attorney in the county of jurisdiction.
5. SUIDS Deaths

Under no circumstances shall consent be given in cases of SUIDS or suspected SUIDS deaths.
6. After reviewing and discussing the case with the appropriate law enforcement investigators, the on-call pathologist, and the district attorney in the county of jurisdiction, the Coroner supervisor will make the determination regarding tissue/organ donation. That decision will be considered final.

E. Obligation of Tissue/Organ Recovery Services

Any trauma or unusual circumstances encountered by the surgeon/technician are to be noted in writing. Documentation of the authorization and procedure

must be provided to the Coroner supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours (facsimile is permissible).