NEVADA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CORONER DIVISION DIRECTIVE
35
Effective Date
March 7, 2006

SUBJECT **FAMILY VIEWING OF DECEASED PRIOR TO AUTOPSY**

POLICY To preserve the condition of the deceased and the physical evidence at the scene so that the pathologist can make an accurate report on the cause of death.

PURPOSE **To provide all deputy coroners with basic guidelines for family viewing of deceased prior to autopsy.**

CODE REFERENCE

CASE LAW

DEFINITIONS

PROCEDURE

A. General Information

1. **On all homicide cases or suspicious death cases, family viewing prior to autopsy will not be allowed.**

2. **On all cases where trauma is involved and the deceased is not suitable for viewing and would need substantial preparation at the mortuary, viewing will not be allowed. It is difficult for the pathologist to determine what medical intervention was done when all i.v.'s, tubes, pads, etc., have been removed. For example, an injection site could be from injecting heroin or methamphetamine vs. therapeutic intervention. It is also important that the pathologist view the body undisturbed since he may find injuries not consistent with the story that would not be discernable if the body were to be cleaned.**

3. **On infant and/or child deaths, where the death appears to be from natural causes or a witnessed drowning, where there is no trauma involved, family viewing may be allowed after checking with supervisory personnel prior to giving permission. On adult natural death cases, exceptions might also be made but must be cleared with supervisory personnel as well.**