

Child Deaths

1121.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Child deaths are inherently sensitive in nature and therefore must be investigated with the utmost care and diligence. For this reason, this policy serves to establish the additional requirements of Deputy Coroners when investigating the death of a child.

- (a) Definition: "Child" is defined as any decedent under the age of 18.

1121.2 RECORDS CHECKS

Deputy Coroners shall search criminal records of any adult(s) residing in the decedent's residence, or responsible for the care of the decedent, at the time of his/her death. Records searches shall include, at a minimum:

- (a) Prior local and state arrests via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS)
- (b) Prior reports of child abuse via the Child Abuse Registry (CAR)

1121.3 MANDATED REPORTER

Per Penal Code 11165.7, the Coroner is a mandated reporter responsible for reporting suspected child abuse. As such, Deputy Coroners shall make a report of any child whom he/she knows, or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect.

- (a) Deputy Coroners shall make the initial report to the Child Abuse Registry immediately, or as soon as practically possible, by telephone.
- (b) Deputy Coroners shall also prepare and send a written follow-up thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

1121.4 SUDDEN UNEXPECTED INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SUIDS) - NOTIFICATIONS

Deputy Coroners shall report any death suspected to be a result of Sudden or Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS) to the Orange County Public Health Nurse, by completing and sending the "SUIDS Notification Form" to the designated representative via email.

1121.5 SCHOOL NOTIFICATIONS

Deputy Coroners shall report the death of any school age child to the Department of Education, by completing and sending the "School Fatality Notification Form" to the designated representative via email.

- (a) "School age child" is defined as any decedent ages 5-18.

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1121.6 DOCUMENTATION

Deputy Coroners shall document completion of all requirements outlined in this policy in CME on the page titled "Child Death." Additionally, Deputy Coroners shall complete all remaining sections of the "Child Death" page, when applicable to circumstances of the death.

1121.7 CHILD DEATHS INVOLVING A FIREARM

Deputy Coroners investigating any firearm related death of a child in the jurisdiction of the Orange County Sheriff's Department shall:

- (a) Notify the Orange County Crime Lab and request a forensic photographer's presence at both the death location and autopsy examination.
- (b) Notify Orange County Sheriff's Department – Homicide Detail of the death.
 - 1. If the Homicide Detail declines to investigate the case, the Deputy Coroner may proceed with his/her death investigation in accordance with Division policy and procedure.
- (c) All notifications shall be clearly documented in the Coroner Investigator (CI) report.
- (d) If the death occurs outside of the jurisdiction of the Orange County Sheriff's Department, this policy section does not apply.