

Photographs

1132.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The taking of photographs by Coroner Division personnel is an important tool used to visually preserve components of the death investigation, including the death location, the decedent, pertinent evidence, and autopsy findings. This policy serves to establish rules and guidelines for the taking, storing, and release of photographs by Coroner Division personnel.

1132.2 DEFINITION

For purposes of this policy, "photographs" refers to any printed, digital, or video image, or other forms of visual media.

1132.3 TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs shall be taken in all of the following instances:

(a) Deputy Coroners shall document with photographs any decedent, death scene, or place of injury to which he/she responds in the course of a death investigation.

1. Photographs shall include any pertinent evidence found at the scene, or on/near the decedent's person.

(b) The Coroner Technician shall take at least one facial photograph of any decedent received at the Coroner Division Facility, and of autopsy findings when requested by the Coroner's pathologist.

1132.3.1 INSTRUCTIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Instructional photographs of a decedent and/or death location taken in the normal course of duty may be used for instructional purposes with the approval of the Coroner Division Commander or his/her designee. (Civil Code Procedure 129 Section B)

1132.4 PERMITTED DEVICES

Authorized photographs may be taken on a Department issued digital camera or cell phone.

1132.5 STORAGE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Printed photographs and other non-digital photographic mediums (i.e. discs or video tapes), shall be stored in the physical case file. Digital photographs shall be uploaded to the Coroner Division's photograph database (LYNX) for permanent storage.

(a) Once the digital upload to LYNX is completed, photographs may be deleted from the original device.

(b) Photographs may not be duplicated from a case file or LYNX without approval from the Coroner Division Commander or his/her designee.

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department

Orange County SD Policy Manual

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1132.6 RELEASE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

(a) Any request for release of photographs shall be referred to the Clerical Unit for review and processing. A member of the clerical unit shall review the request for legality, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedures 129 prior to the release of any photographs.

(b) Members of the Coroner Division may not display or make available any photographs of a decedent, death location, or taken within the Coroner Division Facility, without prior approval from the Coroner Division Commander or his/her designee.