



September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

1



AUTHORITY

Florida Statute - Chapter 406 (Medical Examiner Law)

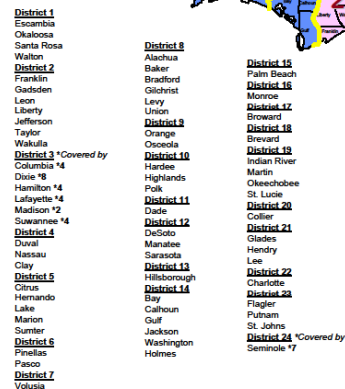
- Establishes duties and responsibilities of the District Medical Examiners
- Provides for the establishment of the Medical Examiner Commission under FDLE for oversight of the District Medical Examiners
- Directs that fees, salaries, and expenses be paid by the local County

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

3

Coverage Map



September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

2



AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Florida Statute - Chapter 406 (Medical Examiner Law)

Florida Administrative Code – Chapter 11G

Practice Guidelines for Florida Medical Examiners


Florida Statute – Chapter 382 (Vital Records Law)

Office Policy and Procedures Manual


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

4



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATION


When any person dies in the State:

1. Of criminal violence
2. By accident
3. By suicide
4. Suddenly, when in apparent good health
5. Unattended by a physician or other recognized practitioner
6. In any prison or penal institution


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

5



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATION


When a body is brought into the State without proper medical certification

When a body is to be cremated, dissected or buried at sea


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

7



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATION


When any person dies in the State:

7. In police custody
8. In any suspicious or unusual circumstance
9. By criminal abortion
10. By poison
11. By disease constituting a threat to public health
12. By disease, injury or toxic agent resulting from employment


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

6



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM

Ensures that certain types of deaths are investigated


Ensures that an informed cause and manner of death is determined utilizing medical and scientific expertise for those certain types of deaths

Ensures that accurate death records are prepared and filed for civil (eg. Insurance benefits) and criminal (eg. Justice system) proceedings


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

8



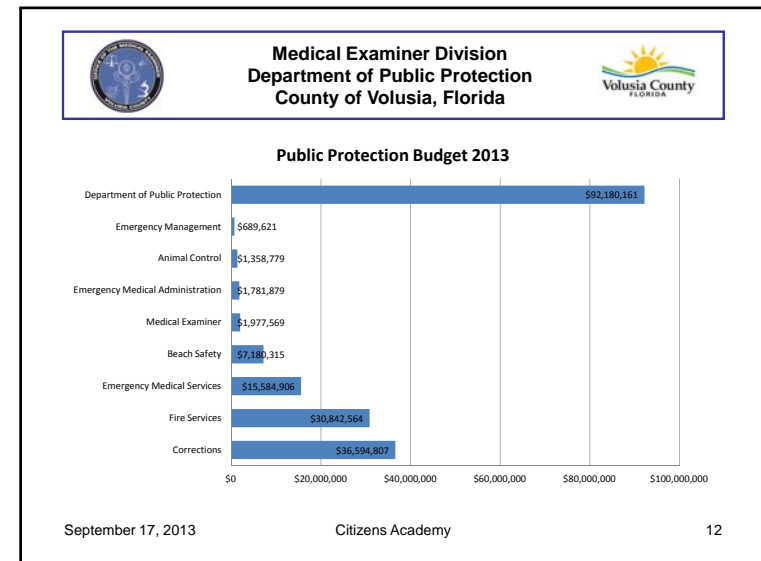
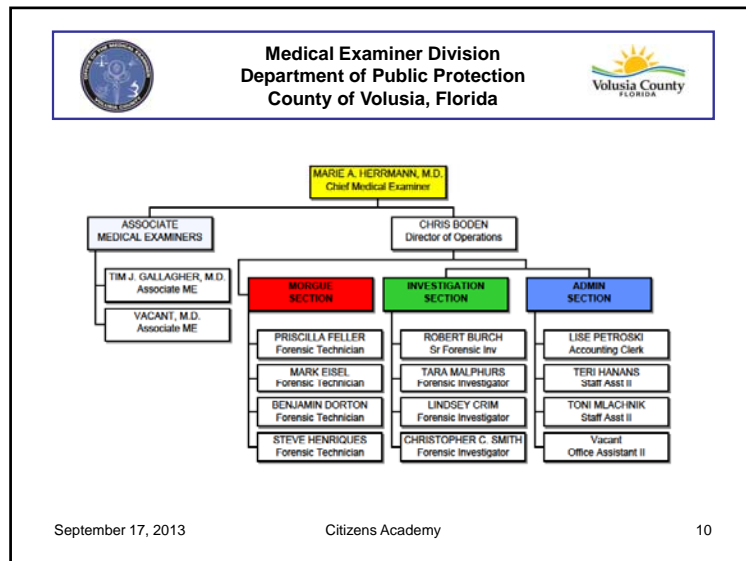
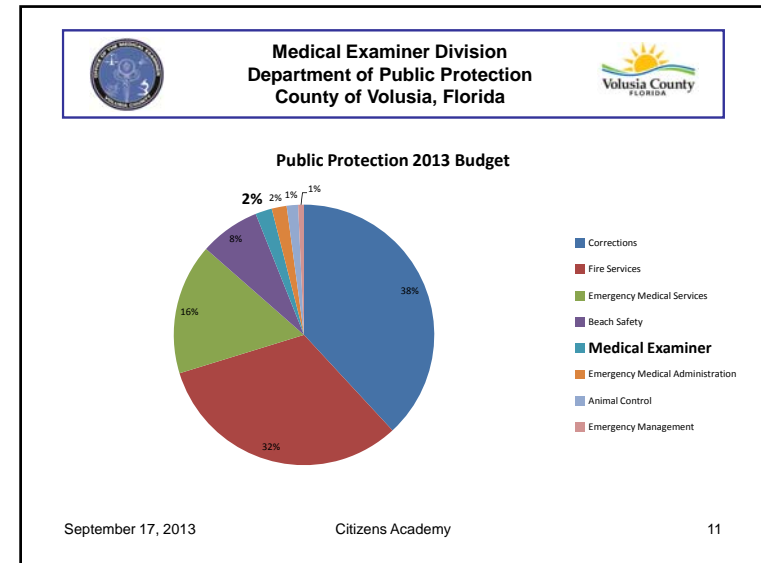
Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



TYPES OF MEDICAL EXAMINER INVESTIGATIONS

- INQUIRY and AUTOPSY and Death Certification**
- INQUIRY and EXTERNAL EXAMINATION and Death Certification**
- INQUIRY and Death Certification (Under consideration)**
- INQUIRY and Declined Jurisdiction**
- REVIEW of cause of death in order to provide Cremation Authorization**

September 17, 2013
Citizens Academy
9





Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



WHAT DOES THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF DO?

Accounting Clerk

- Serves as first-line receptionist
- Handles the day to day business tasks (purchasing, billing)
- Also performs duties of the unfunded Office Assistant position (tracks histology materials, toxicology and hospital reports, send out reports)

Staff Assistant(s) II

- Serve as receptionists
- Handles the pathologist's paperwork and assembles the medical examiner report
- Proofreads all medical examiner reports
- Coordinates with Attorneys to schedule depositions and court appearances

Requires cross-training to answer and direct all incoming calls, greet visitors, and instruct body removal personnel on procedures

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

13



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



WHAT DOES THE INVESTIGATIVE STAFF DO?

- Receive the first report of death calls and determines if a death falls under our jurisdiction
- Respond to certain death scenes and gather information and take photos and may transport remains
- On-call, 24/7 on rotation
- Work on site during special events at the DIS
- Liaison with various law enforcement agencies and healthcare providers and funeral homes and family of the deceased
- Coordinate with organ and tissue procurement organizations
- Prepare official State death record
- Coordinate cremation approval process

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

15



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



WHAT DOES THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS DO?

- Supervises all staff, except the three physicians
- Handles the front end of all contacts with County support services including contracts/purchasing, personnel, legal, IT, facilities, fleet, etc.
- Prepares the Division budget
- Troubleshoots operational and investigative issues
- Functions as a backup death investigator
- Attends meetings
- Directs approved facility and program tours
- Arranges for continuing education opportunities for staff

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

14



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



WHAT DOES THE TECHNICAL STAFF DO?

- Utilize evidentiary, chain of custody procedures
- Receive and prepare bodies for examination by the medical examiners
- Take photos and x-rays, prepare personal effects inventories, create labels, collect evidence, assist the pathologist during autopsies, order tests as directed, assist crime scene personnel as needed
- Maintain cleanliness of the autopsy and receiving areas
- Release bodies to funeral home personnel
- Many other things

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

16



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



WHAT DO THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS DO?

- Assimilate information provided by the Investigators
- Perform autopsies and other examinations
- Prepare written reports of findings
- Discuss findings with law enforcement, healthcare professionals and family, as needed
- Review death records for cremation authorization
- Provide expert witness testimony via deposition and court appearances
- Provide community education via seminar presentations
- Maintain competence through continuing education opportunities

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

17



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



CALENDAR YEAR 2012 CASE SUMMARY

COUNTY	# OF AUTOPSIES	# OF VISUALS	# OF DC'S	# OF NME'S	# OF CREMATIONS	# OF DEATHS REVIEWED
VOLUSIA	423	280	9	307	4155	5174
SEMINOLE	193	91	1	257	1726	2268
TOTALS	616	371	10	564	5881	7442

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

19



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



MEDICAL EXAMINER SUPPORT SERVICES/CONSULTANTS

FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

CA Pound Human Identification Laboratory
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Assessment of skeletal material

FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY

NMS Labs
Willow Grove, PA
Toxicological analysis of specimens

NEUROPATHOLOGY

Stephen Nelson, MA, MD
Bartow, FL

LIVERY SERVICES

West Volusia Removal Service
Orange City, FL
Decedent removal and transport services

FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY

Dr. Jan Westberry
New Smyrna Beach, FL
Identification of human remains

FORENSIC HISTOLOGY

Halifax Medical Center
Daytona Beach, FL
Histological preparation of specimens

RADIOLOGY

Radiology Associates
Daytona Beach, FL

CLINICAL LABORATORY SERVICES

Halifax Medical Center
Daytona Beach, FL

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

18



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



CALENDAR YEAR 2012 EXPERT WITNESS EVENTS

COUNTY	# of GRAND JURY APPEARANCES	# OF DEPOSITIONS	# OF TRIALS
VOLUSIA	0	15	5
SEMINOLE	0	5	2
TOTALS	0	20	7

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

20



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



OTHER ACTIVITIES and SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Revenue Generating Activities (which goes directly into the General Fund)

- Partner by contract with Seminole County to provide medical examiner services (District 24)
- Review of deaths in order for body to be cremated
- Use of the facility by postmortem tissue procurement organizations

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

21



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



INNOVATIONS

Digital Radiography – acquired with Federal grant funding in 2008 – (in need of replacement)

- Reduces chemical processor use and chemical waste disposal
- Provides direct electronic storage
- Quicker preparation of radiographic images

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

23



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



OTHER ACTIVITIES and SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- Informal educational partnership with Daytona State College Teaching a portion of the annual or semi-annual Detectives Academy
- Participate in Child Death Review Teams in Volusia and Seminole Counties
- Participate in Volusia/Flagler Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)
- Member of the Volusia Flagler Police Chief Association and the Seminole County Law Enforcement Association
- Member of the Volusia County Medical Advisory Board

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

22



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



INNOVATIONS

Postmortem Report Distribution

- Electronic via email .pdf or fax
- Saves time
- Reduces costs of paper, envelopes and postage


Florida Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) through the Vital Records Office

- Death certification completed online (except for amendments and fetal deaths)
- Saves time for medical examiners and funeral directors
- Reduces costs of envelopes and certified return receipt postage


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

24



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



GOOD THINGS


Accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), June 2010, for 5 years

- Signifies to the public that the office is performing at a high level of competence


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

25



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



CHALLENGES

Budget Concerns


- Maintaining quality medical examiner services in a tightening budget
- Maintaining employee interest and moral

Implementation of a Case Management system to replace outdated, soon to be technically unsupported database


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

27



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



CHALLENGES


Infrastructure of Medical Examiner Facility (Capital Improvement)

- Refrigerated body storage space
- Bad odors wafting into administrative offices (offensive to employees and visitors)
- Lack of space for storage of supplies and evidence
- Maxed out on electrical (freezers)
- Inadequate break/lunch room for staff size and facility location (odors)


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

26



Medical Examiner Division
 Department of Public Protection
 County of Volusia, Florida



CHALLENGES


State and National Professional Expectations

- Maintaining NAME accreditation
- Compliance with Standards
- Maintaining subject matter expertise
- Compliance with forthcoming National Standards (SWGMDI)


September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

28



Medical Examiner Division
Department of Public Protection
County of Volusia, Florida



CHALLENGES

Responding to the Public's High Expectations

- "CSI effect"
- Balancing medical examiner mission with the demands of private interests

Persistently unidentified persons

- Staff and time to focus on these old cases
- Time to coordinate and follow-up with local and national law enforcement
- Tapping into resources to establish the identification

September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

29











September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

45



September 17, 2013

Citizens Academy

46