

§3027. Procedure at scene of death

1. Movement or alteration of body prohibited. Except as otherwise provided in this section:

A. In any medical examiner case a person may not move or alter the body or any objects at the scene of death prior to the arrival, or without the express authorization, of the medical examiner or Office of Chief Medical Examiner; [PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).]

B. In any medical examiner case in which physical injury attributable to noncriminal conduct is suspected or in which any physical injury by motor vehicle, including vehicular manslaughter, is suspected, a person may not move or alter the body or any objects at the scene of death prior to the arrival, or without the express authorization, of the district attorney for the district in which the body is located or the district attorney's authorized representative; and [PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).]

C. In any medical examiner case in which physical injury attributable to criminal conduct other than vehicular manslaughter is suspected, a person may not move or alter the body or any objects at the scene of death prior to the arrival, or without the express authorization, of the Attorney General or the Attorney General's authorized representative. [PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).]

[PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).]

2. Preservation or removal of body. In any medical examiner case in which the body is in danger of being destroyed or lost or the location of the body renders it a serious threat to the safety or health of others, a person may take whatever steps are reasonably necessary for the retention or preservation of the body prior to the arrival or authorization of the medical examiner or the Office of Chief Medical Examiner. The person shall first, if practicable, exactly mark the location and position of the body.

In any medical examiner case in which physical injury attributable to criminal conduct other than vehicular manslaughter is not suspected and the presence of the body is likely to cause hardship or outrage, and a medical examiner or the Office of Chief Medical Examiner can not be reached in a reasonable period of time, the district attorney for the district in which the body is located or the district attorney's authorized representative may authorize removal of the body by the law enforcement officer in charge of the scene. The officer shall first, if practicable, exactly mark the location and position of the body.

A. When death occurs in a medical facility such as a hospital or an ambulance, the body may be removed to a mortuary under the following conditions:

(1) The incident causing the death did not occur in the medical facility;

(2) The body is transported to a secure place in the same condition as when death occurred; and

(3) The only alterations are the disconnecting of fixed medical equipment. [PL 1979, c. 538, §7 (NEW).]

[PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).]

3. Procedures. Before removal of the body as provided in subsection 2, the law enforcement officer shall whenever possible arrange for photographs, measurements and a record of the location and position of the body.

When the death is suspected of involving physical injury attributable to criminal conduct other than vehicular manslaughter, the procedure in this subsection must be undertaken with the supervision of an authorized representative of the Attorney General.

In all medical examiner cases in which physical injury attributable to criminal conduct other than vehicular manslaughter is suspected, the procedure in this subsection may be waived concurrently by

the Chief Medical Examiner and the Attorney General or the Attorney General's authorized representative.

In all other medical examiner cases the procedure in this subsection may be waived concurrently by the medical examiner and the district attorney for the district in which the body is located or the district attorney's authorized representative.

[PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1967, c. 534, §2 (NEW). PL 1979, c. 538, §7 (RPR). PL 2001, c. 222, §8 (AMD).

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