

## What do I do now?

- If applicable, notify designated Executor or Durable Power of Attorney
- Arrange for care of any dependents as well as pets
- Contact the selected Funeral Home
- Remove any valuables from decedent's home, secure the residence
- Cancel any scheduled appointments of the deceased
- If he/she was employed, contact Employer
- Advise creditors (banks) of the death

## Locate the following Documents:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Will, Power of Attorney or other directives
- Marriage License
- Military discharge papers (DD-214)
- Copy of funeral prearrangements
- Life insurance policies

## Skagit County Agencies

Skagit Co. Sheriff 360-416-1911  
Mount Vernon PD 360-336-6271  
Anacortes PD 360-293-4684  
Burlington PD 360-755-0921  
Sedro-Woolley PD 360-855-0111  
Washington State Patrol 360-757-1175

Health Department 360-416-1500  
(Issues certified Death Certificates)

Dept. of Veteran Affairs 1-800-827-1000

Social Security 1-800-772-1213

## Information for the Funeral Home

- Deceased's First, Middle, Last name
- Deceased's Maiden Name
- Deceased's Home Address
- Deceased's Social Security Number
- Deceased's Date of Birth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Marital Status
- Spouse's First and Last Name
- Deceased's highest level of education
- Deceased's Occupation
- Deceased's Place of Birth (city and state)
- Father's Name, Birth City and State
- Mother's Name, Birth City, State

## If your loved one was a Veteran

- Entered service date
- Entered service place
- Service number
- Separated from Service Date and Place
- Grade, Rank, or Ranking
- Organization and Branch of Service

## Funeral Homes in Skagit County

### Anacortes

- Evans 360-293-3311

### Mount Vernon

- Hawthorne 360-424-1154
- Kern 360-336-2153

### Sedro-Woolley

- Lemley 360-855-1288

### Alternate Funeral Agencies

- Alpha Omega 360-424-3531
- Skagit Cremation 360-424-0282

# Skagit County

## Office of the Coroner

Hayley L. Thompson, D-ABMDI  
Coroner

### SURVIVORS GUIDE



Assigned Investigator:

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1700 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Office Hours: M-F 9am-5pm  
Office Phone (360) 416-1996 (24 hr)  
[coroner@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:coroner@co.skagit.wa.us)

The Coroner's Office is involved for one of the following reasons:

- The death was sudden, unexplained, and there was little to no known medical history to explain the death.
- The decedent did not have a current doctor overseeing his/her care.
- The death is of suspicious or unnatural circumstances, i.e. violence, suicide, accident, drug-related.

Washington state law gives the Coroner certain rights and responsibilities when conducting a death investigation which include (but are not limited to):

- Obtaining pertinent records of the deceased to assist with a determination of cause and manner of death.
- Obtaining information from involved parties.

What happens next?

- If the Coroner's Office responds to the death, the Coroner's involvement may be minimal to extensive depending on the circumstances of the case.
- Photographs, external examination of the body, and interviews will be conducted to determine the involvement of the Coroner and if an autopsy is necessary.
- If further examination is needed, the decedent will be transported to the Skagit County Coroner's Office.
- The family will be notified of the Coroner's Office involvement and the next steps.

Will there be an autopsy?

Washington state law gives the Coroner authority to decide if an autopsy is necessary to determine the most likely cause of death. Not every death will undergo an autopsy, however, each case requiring coroner involvement will undergo a comprehensive investigation. Objections to having an autopsy performed need to be addressed to the Coroner's Office. The Coroner's Office will work with the family in making this decision.

What if you want an autopsy?

If the Coroner's Office declines to perform an autopsy, the family has the right to have a private autopsy done at their own expense (approximate cost can be \$2,500 or more).

Autopsy findings

It is important to realize that autopsies do not always provide a definitive cause of death. Autopsy reports are confidential and subject to HIPPA laws. Only the Next-of-kin may obtain a copy of reports generated by this office. Final reports may take up to 8 months to complete.

A records request form with photo ID is required to release records. Reports will not be released until the case is closed.

Pending Cause and Manner of Death

A pending cause of death is listed on the death certificate when more studies are needed. This may include toxicology, microscopic analysis, and review of medical records. Even though the cause and manner of death are not determined, a death certificate will be issued and funeral arrangements can be made.

How long does a Pending Cause of Death take to determine?

Pending cases can take an excess of 4-8 months. Our office will contact the next-of-kin when the cause and manner of death has been determined.

Certified Death Certificates

The Coroner's Office cannot issue death certificates. The death certificate is filed with the Skagit County Health Department by the funeral home. The selected funeral home or the County Vital Records office can assist you in obtaining certified copies.

Financial Concerns Regarding Arrangements

Skagit County does not have an indigent program to assist with arrangements. If money is a factor, speak with the funeral director regarding your concerns and they may be able to suggest alternatives or payment plans.

If no funeral home can be established, then the decedent may be released to a local funeral home by the Coroner's Office. Next of kin are free to use the same facility or have their loved one transferred to a funeral home of their choice.

Viewing of the decedent

Once your loved one is brought into our care, no viewing is permitted. If you wish to view your loved one, please arrange a viewing with the selected funeral home.

Please note that identification is confirmed by the Coroner's Office and family is not required to identify the decedent.