

Medical Examiner

**Medical
Examiner**

22 Positions

MISSION

The Medical Examiner's Office is mandated to investigate and determine the cause and manner of death of any individual who dies in Palm Beach County due to such causes or circumstances as outlined in Chapter 406 of the Florida State Statutes and Florida Administrative Code 11G.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES/FACILITIES

The Medical Examiner's Office performs statutory forensic investigative responsibilities through the combined efforts of a Forensic Pathologist, Forensic Investigator, technician staff, and an operational/support staff. Twenty-four hour forensic investigative support is provided to all local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in order to determine the cause and manner of death of all statutory Medical Examiner

cases. Autopsies are performed and pathologic findings are documented. The Medical Examiner's forensic staff also provides case testimony through deposition, grand jury testimony, and court testimony.

TRENDS AND ISSUES

Education: The Medical Examiner's Office continues to be very active in educating law enforcement agencies, medical personnel (nurses and paramedics), and area high school students regarding the role and responsibilities of the Medical Examiner. Lectures are conducted both in the field as well as at the Medical Examiner's Office.

Committee Participation: The Medical Examiner's Forensic Pathologists attend monthly meetings and participate in the following Palm Beach County Committees: Child Fatality Review Committee, Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Committee, Trauma Quality Review Committee, District Child Death Review Committee, and Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team.

Rapid Response Team: The Medical Examiner's staff participates with the Palm Beach County Rapid Response Team in investigations involving infant and police related deaths.

Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System (FEMORS): FEMORS is an organization that assists District Medical Examiners (anywhere in the state of Florida) in the event of a catastrophic mass casualty event. The Palm Beach County Medical Examiner's Office has teamed with FEMORS to assist should an event of this magnitude occur. Training sessions were held FY 2003 through FY 2006 with another session planned for FY 2007. FEMORS personnel have been placed on alert status five times during FY 2004 and FY 2005. Personnel are prepared to respond to assist with body recovery and identification of the deceased in other counties if needed.

DEFINITION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

To investigate all deaths reported to the Palm Beach County Medical Examiner's Office which fall under the guidelines of Chapter 406 of the Florida Revised Statutes and Florida Administrative Code 11G. Primary services include:

- ▶ provide 24-hour forensic investigative support to all local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies;
- ▶ determine the cause and manner of death of all Medical Examiner cases submitted for review;
- ▶ provide support to law enforcement agencies in the presentation of forensic evidence to the court system;
- ▶ provide cremation request review or investigation to all funeral homes; and
- ▶ provide death causation factors and statistical data to all requesting agencies.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR FY 2007

- ▶ Improve communications with health care and criminal justice agencies.
- ▶ Provide evidentiary testimony to civil and criminal cases as necessary.
- ▶ Present educational programs for law enforcement agencies, medical personnel, and county personnel.
- ▶ Collect, maintain, and provide statistical data to various public and private agencies.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2005 Actual	5 Year Trend	Benchmark Comparison	FY 2006 Budget	FY 2007 Target
Total cases investigated (excluding cremations)	2,235	-1.2%	n/a	2,438	2,301
Medical Examiner cases	1,329	n/a	n/a	1,450	1,245
Non-medical cases	906	n/a	n/a	988	671
Scene investigations	314	-3.4%	n/a	343	338
Autopsies	1,072	7.8%	n/a	1,169	1,061
Inspections	250	0%	n/a	273	172
Cremation approvals	5,420	0.1%	n/a	5,913	4,858
Expert testimony/consultations	40	n/a	n/a	43	110

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FINANCIAL & STAFFING SUMMARY	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Budget	FY 2006 Estimated	FY 2007 Budget
<u>REVENUES GENERATED</u>				
User Fees/Charges	167,191	180,000	180,000	180,000
Other	5,062	3,000	3,000	3,000
TOTAL	\$172,253	\$183,000	\$183,000	\$183,000
<u>APPROPRIATIONS</u>				
Personal Services	1,698,441	1,617,325	1,784,068	2,081,824
Operating Expenses	765,482	860,630	865,274	872,228
Capital Outlay	8,232	76,000	76,000	30,200
TOTAL	\$2,472,155	\$2,553,955	\$2,725,342	\$2,984,252
<u>STAFFING</u>				
Positions	19	20	20	22
Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)	19.00	20.00	20.00	22.00

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM PRIOR YEAR

Revenue: Revenue generated by the Medical Examiner's Office comes from the issuance of photographic reproductions, cremation approvals, copying of case files and disposable protective clothing provided to students when viewing autopsies.

Addition to Personnel: One Associate Medical Examiner was added to decrease the maximum number of autopsies performed by each pathologist and one Forensic Technician was added to reduce the Forensic workload on existing staff.

