Appendix A. Medicolegal Death Investigation Frequently Used Data Elements

This appendix provides a graphic on frequently used data elements in medicolegal death investigation (adapted from Parish and Hanzlick\(^\text{15}\)).

This graphic shows the final list of data elements that should be collected for every case. This graphic also links these frequently used elements to overarching categories of death investigation and indicates how these elements are integrated into the death investigation process. Italicized items are examples of information that could be provided during an investigation, and standard information is represented in normal text. This graphic can be downloaded and used in agency training to ensure all data are collected. Additionally, the graphic can be used to develop checklists for death investigators, develop programming requirements for data developers to code MDI information, or assist with standardization and consistency among data exchange as part of other resources.
Medicolegal Death Investigation Data Elements

Demographic
- Decedent's marital status
- Usual occupation
- Social security number
- Next of kin
- Name
- Relationship
- Address
- Phone number(s)
- Date of birth
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Sex
- Birth date
- Age
- Full name (if deceased, putative name if available)

Circumstances
- Person who last knew decedent to be alive or okay
- Chemical exposure/Decontamination
- Skin/abdominal paraspinal detector
- Number of other persons known to be dead from same incident
- Tobacco/Drug use/Prison record
- Death scene investigation findings
- Case-specific information
- Safety issues/mechanisms identified at scene
- Decedent's address
- Underwear/Drugs and Prion record
- Found dead, unconscious, or in distress
- May have been
- Address where found dead, unconscious, or in distress
- Drug at scene
- Death occurred
- Event leading to death occurred at work
- Medication/Paraphernalia
- Drug powder
- Death associated with legal interventions/in custody
- Potential referrals
- Child abuse
- Elder abuse
- Domestic violence
- Unhoused

Date & Time
- Decedent's age
- Death reported to the medical examiner/coroner
- Decedent was last known to be alive or okay
- Place of death
- Last address of decedent
- Address where death occurred
- Address where injury occurred

Location
- Type of place where events leading to death occurred
- Place where found dead, unconscious, or in distress
- Name of hospital where decedent was first taken

Narrative
- Description of circumstances
- Decedent's age
- Decedent's date
- Death scene investigation findings
- How decedent was last known to be alive or okay
- Case-specific information
- Occupation/Safety and Health Administrative investigation
- Social media
- Digital evidence
- Social security number
- Name of persons present at death

Examination/Autopsy
- Death certificate
- Follow up (any information not added in case proceed)
- Specific autopsy findings—autopsy report
- Referral for autopsy/examination
- Name of person prescribed
- Details
- Prone
- Death scene investigation findings
- Digital evidence
- Medical images
- Toxicology/Genealogical studies
- Limited autopsy
- Autopsy
- Forensic anthropology
- Genealogical studies
- Death scene findings—autopsy report
- Limited medical history
- Conversion to magnetic
- Relevant procedures
- Digital evidence
- Social media
- Smartwatch
- Computer

Medical History
- Decedent's age
- Decedent's date
- Death scene investigation findings
- How decedent was last known to be alive or okay
- Case-specific information
- Death associated with legal interventions/in custody
- Potential referrals
- Child abuse
- Elder abuse
- Domestic violence
- Unhoused

Cause & Manner
- Cause of death
- Determination of condition(s) in all lines that list a cause of death
- Other significant conditions
- Duration of condition(s)
- Cause of death statement
- Date of death
- Death scene investigation findings
- Description of circumstances
- Decedent's age
- Decedent's date
- Death scene investigation findings
- How decedent was last known to be alive or okay
- Case-specific information
- Death associated with legal interventions/in custody
- Potential referrals
- Child abuse
- Elder abuse
- Domestic violence
- Unhoused

Toxicology
- Specimen for which result is reported
- Specific toxicology test performed
- Specimen for which result is reported
- Specific toxicology test performed
- Concentrations
- Samples retained
- Hospital samples
- Details
- Organ procurement organization/tissue recovery date and time
- Details

Note: Items represented as small, closed, and colored circles are data elements that should be recorded in every case. Items represented in italics after black dots are examples of data and are not an exhaustive list. From Ropero-Miller, Jeri, Nichole Bynum, Kelly Keyes, Erica Fornaro, and Micaela Ascolese. Data Exchange Practices of Medicolegal Death Investigation. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International, December 2022.