

2004/48 Appendix A

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

DEALING WITH DEATH

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INTRODUCTION

This guidance replaces all previous policy and guidance on the subject published on Chief Constable's Orders.

The guidance in this document aims to:

- provide an effective investigation of all deaths reported to the police;
- ensure each investigation can provide an audit trail capable of withstanding scrutiny;
- minimise bureaucracy;
- maximise the efficiency of police resources.

This document does not include guidance for the investigation of a homicide, as that is already documented in the Murder Investigation Manual. The Force Major Incident Team (FMIT) is responsible for assessing all suspected homicides and determining the mode of investigation.

On average there are approximately 30,000 deaths per year occurring in the Greater Manchester area, and the police become involved in slightly less than one third of those deaths. This amounts to approximately 9,000 deaths per year.

It is worth noting that with the advances in medical science and resuscitation techniques, people having suffered serious trauma can be kept alive for a lengthy period of time, often making a full recovery. However, these people may eventually die of their injuries and the principles and techniques outlined in this document are of equal relevance in investigating the initial reported incident so that valuable potential evidence is gathered at the time of the report.

INVESTIGATING A REPORT OF A DEATH

The object of any police investigation into the report of a death is primarily to determine if the death is a homicide. Secondly, it is to assist the investigations of the coroner.

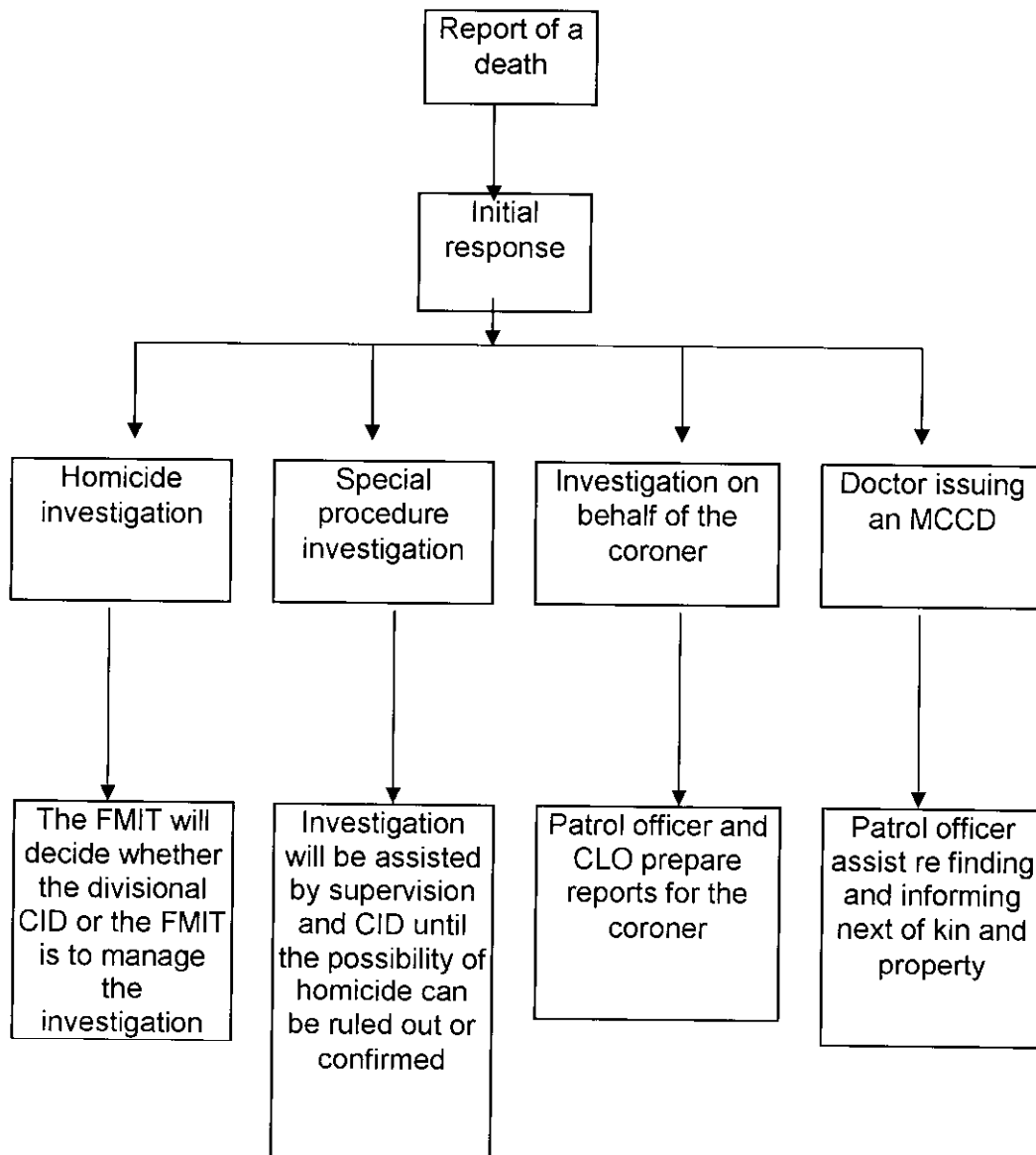
This document provides information about how to deal with the investigation of a death. All death investigations will pass through the 'Report of a death' and 'Initial response' phase. After that, the officers dealing with the investigation must determine whether the death is being investigated:

- as a homicide;
- as a special procedure investigation;
- on behalf of the coroner; or
- when a doctor is issuing a medical certificate of the cause of death (MCCD).

Information regarding each type of investigation can be found in this document or in the murder manual.

The process can be broken down into a number of stages, which will be described in detail later. The following process map gives an overview of the basic progression of a case.

Process map – dealing with a report of death



REPORT OF A DEATH

Objectives

1. To accurately identify the type of death to be investigated.
2. To take appropriate action to discover and preserve available evidence.

Affected resources

OCR operators, radio operators, police station counter clerks, coroners' liaison officers, any police patrol and also any police personnel receiving notification of a death from another agency, for example the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Activities and standards that should be applied by whoever receives the report of a death

ACTIVITY	STANDARDS
Initial contact	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The caller should be calmed, reassured and dealt with in a courteous and supportive manner.2. The person receiving the report should ensure that the nature of the incident being reported has been fully understood .3. . The caller should be asked the relevant questions.4. Consider the use of 'language line' if English is not the callers first language.
Secure evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Those receiving initial reports should always be mindful of the potential to secure evidence at an early stage.2. Evidence can be secured by questioning the person making the report and accurately recording the person's details and information.
Record	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An incident log (FWIN) should be opened.2. The FWIN should be coded accordingly

Actions

Initial contact

Bereavement affects people in many different ways, especially if the death is sudden and unexpected. People may be angry, confused or even hysterical and before full information can be obtained from them they need reassurance that they are dealing with someone who is capable of supporting them and assisting them with their situation. As the first point of contact, it will be necessary to establish if the caller is correct in reporting the incident as a death. In the interests of preserving life, it must be established that all appropriate medical assistance has been given.

The caller may have a wealth of information but, he or she might need to be asked direct questions to elicit the necessary information to identify the type of death GMP is dealing with.

Consider the use of Language Line if the person receiving the call cannot understand the caller sufficiently to identify a location, or the fact that a death is being reported. However, if the person receiving the call can get sufficient details to deploy a resource, this should be done, and the attending patrol officer should get further details.

Secure evidence

The person receiving an initial report of a death may be in a position to ensure that any potential evidence is kept secure, until a patrol officer can attend the scene and take control of it. This may involve giving clear instructions to the caller.

The apparently routine reporting of a death may develop into a homicide investigation, so information given during the initial report could become vitally important to that investigation. This could also be the same for coronial investigations, so it is important that care is taken to accurately record the details of the caller and the details he or she gives.

Record

In all cases where a report is received of an incident involving a death, the details must be recorded. The majority of reports will come through the OCR and will be recorded directly onto a FWIN. In other circumstances, details of the initial report must be recorded, ideally in a pocket notebook, on a message form 776 or message form 776C. The details can then be relayed to the Operational Communications Room (OCR) which will be responsible for opening a FWIN on the CIH where a resource is deployed. Both the original note and the FWIN are potentially disclosable evidence in any subsequent homicide prosecution, and could equally be of value to a coronial investigation so it is important that they are made available for the investigating officer, be it the SIO or CLO.

To ensure that all departments having areas of responsibility for certain types of deaths are updated, if the true type of death is known at this stage, the FWIN shall be coded accordingly by the OCR staff. The departments are:

- homicides – FMIT;
- death of a person under the age of 18 years – FMIT and FSU HQ;
- illicit drug related death – FMIT and force drug unit
- accidental deaths, excluding road collisions and work-related deaths – FMIT.

INITIAL RESPONSE

Objectives

The objectives of the initial response are:

1. preserving life;
2. determining whether the death is a homicide or special procedure death;
3. accurately recording all relevant information observed or otherwise received.

Generally, in all cases where a death is reported to the police, a police patrol will be sent to deal with the incident. Preservation of life is the prime responsibility of the police when attending at the scene of a reported death or an incident where serious injury has been caused. If there is the slightest indication that the person is exhibiting signs of life, we will call for medical assistance, or for an ambulance to attend. We will administer appropriate first aid. We will be mindful that people can appear to be dead when they do in fact have life signs, these may be very slight and be hardly noticeable, for example in hypothermia cases.

GMP's first role will be to establish if there are any grounds to suspect that the death is a potential homicide. The circumstances of certain types of death are such that it is often more difficult to rule out the possibility of homicide straight away. These deaths may need a prolonged and more in-depth initial investigation in order to establish if the death is a potential homicide, and have been classified as 'special procedure' deaths. They are:


- death of a person under the age of 18 years;
- drug related death;
- suicide;
- death resulting from accidents (excluding road collisions and work-related death).

Affected resources

Affected resources are primarily, patrol officers, their supervision and divisional CID officers. In rare circumstances, officers from other departments such as FMIT, or a CLO, may be the first officers at the scene of a death and this may negate the requirement for patrol officers to attend.

Activities and standards for initial response and for determining if a death is a potential homicide or special procedure death

ACTIVITY	STANDARDS
Resource allocation	1. Allocate appropriate resources or pass the information on to someone who is in a position to do so.
Evaluate and prioritise	1. Check for signs of life and for other casualties. 2. Call for medical assistance and administer first aid, if appropriate. 3. Report findings to the OCR.
Establish the fact of	1. If the ambulance service is in attendance, ambulance

death	<p>staff may be able to diagnose the fact of death.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. If not, contact the deceased's doctor to certify the fact of death. 3. If neither of the above are possible, contact a police surgeon to attend, to certify the fact of death.
Scene assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine if the death is a potential homicide or a special procedure death. If at any stage you suspect the death to be a potential homicide, stop your investigations, contact supervision and CID who will attend and continue the investigation, preserve the scene and start a log. If you consider the death to be a special procedure death, contact supervision and CID who will attend and continue the investigation, you can continue with your investigations and update them on their arrival.  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. If you cannot rule out the possibility of homicide, or are at all unsure of the category of the death, call for assistance from supervision and the CID.
Record	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Record all relevant information and details of any action taken. 2. Record the source of your information in case it needs to be expanded upon, or verified later.
Update the OCR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform the OCR of the status of the death at the earliest opportunity.

Actions

Resource allocation

The quantity and the quality of information available will vary between reports of deaths. The recipient of the initial contact will need to identify and assess the available relevant information about the incident, and allocate the appropriate resources. If the recipient of the initial contact is not in a position to allocate resources, for example, if the recipient is

a police station enquiry counter assistant, he or she must pass the detailed information on to the OCR.

Evaluate and prioritise

When a member of the public reports a death, or a suspected death, the person presumed to be dead needs to be examined by the first officer attending the scene to see if any signs of life are apparent. If so, immediate medical assistance should be called for through the OCR. Any first aid should be administered within the limits of the attending officers training.

Due consideration to the health and safety of the attending patrol officer, and any others at the incident, should be borne in mind, and details relayed to the OCR for the benefit and information of others.

Establish the fact of death

This is the term that officially declares that a person is dead. It does not state why that person has died. If the circumstances suggest the death is due to homicide, the appointed SIO will take responsibility for establishing the fact of death. In all other circumstances, it will be necessary for the patrol officer or the attending detective to arrange for this to be done by:

- a qualified paramedic already in attendance;
- the deceased's doctor;
- a police surgeon.

The Greater Manchester Ambulance Service (GMAS) has many qualified paramedics who can perform this function, however, before it will diagnose the fact of death, the following strict conditions have to be met.:

- There are no suspicious circumstances.
- The deceased is 17 years old or above.
- The death has occurred in the deceased's home.
- The body has been in a collapsed condition with no signs of life for 10 minutes.

The GMAS will only ask a police officer to attend in these circumstances if the deceased's doctor cannot attend, or will not issue a death certificate confirming the medical cause of death. GMAS will provide a copy of its '10 minute test' results, confirming the fact of death which should be passed on to the coroners liaison officer.

Scene assessment



If the attending patrol officer is uncertain, or the death is considered to be a suspected homicide, the divisional detective and patrol supervision must be called to attend to take over the investigation. Any search for signs of life may have disturbed, or contaminated, potential evidence. This is not a problem, because checking for signs of life and attempting resuscitation, if appropriate, are of paramount importance. Detailed information about what has been done must be passed to the detective for information. The scene should be preserved and a log commenced.

If the death does not appear to be a suspected homicide, consideration must be given to whether or not the death is a 'Special Procedure' death, and if so, the divisional detective and patrol supervision must be called to attend to take over the investigation. Again, pass all details regarding searches for signs of life and attempts at resuscitation to the detective. Proceed with a Special Procedure investigation.

There are many features of a particular incident which can be relevant to an investigation, and these will vary from incident to incident. The attending officer must use his or her investigative skills to gain as much information from that scene as possible, as there may be no further opportunity to do so at any later date. The attending officer must question facts presented to him or her, balancing his or her investigation against the needs of the bereaved relatives and friends, until he or she is satisfied that the optimum information has been gathered, to assist in any investigation.

Record

All relevant information and details of any action taken must be recorded, either on the incident log, or in the officer's notebook. Often, aspects that seem irrelevant or insignificant, in the early stages of an investigation, can gain greater significance later, and it is therefore very important to record all information gathered.

Update the OCR

The OCR needs to update the incident log with the progress of the investigation and the status of the death, therefore it must be kept fully informed.

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION

Objectives

The objectives of a homicide investigation are to:

- efficiently conduct a thorough investigation, to establish the identity of the deceased, and the person, or people, responsible for the homicide; and
- assist the coroner in establishing the medical cause of death.

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All deaths reported to the police, when the police determine the death to be a homicide, or, when a homicide is suspected, will be referred to the FMIT. The death, and its circumstances, will be assessed by the FMIT who will decide upon the method of investigation. This document does not amend or alter any of those procedures.

Affected resources

The investigation of homicides will mainly have an impact on divisional CID and the FMIT.

SPECIAL PROCEDURE INVESTIGATION

Objectives

The objectives of a special procedure investigation are to:

- investigate the death, until all possibilities of homicide can be ruled out;
- gather information and record all investigations;
- gather all potential evidence to assist the coroner; to also ensure that the evidence is not lost, should the investigation of death develop into a homicide investigation.

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Our first role when dealing with a confirmed death is to determine whether the death is a homicide. In most cases, this can be established in a short time by applying the investigative skills of the patrol officer attending the scene. However, in a few cases, the potential for a homicide cannot be ruled out straight away despite there being apparently no evidence that a homicide has occurred. These cases will be subject to special procedure investigation and will benefit from close supervision and the enhanced investigative skills of the CID. They are:

- the death of a person under the age of 18 years;
- drug related death;
- suicide;
- death resulting from an accident (excluding road collisions and work-related deaths).

GMP personnel will need to strike a balance between:

- showing sensitivity when working with bereaved families, friends and carers; and
- the obligation to discover and preserve anything which might assist the coroner and the bereaved to understand why the deceased has died; and
- the necessity for the police to detect and preserve anything which might be potential evidence capable of proving, or disproving, if a death is a homicide or not.

The death of a person under the age of 18 years will not be investigated as a special procedure death, if the imminent death of that child was expected by both the bereaved family, or carers, and the medical team caring for the child, and the doctor is able to issue an MCCD. The activities and standards described below are in addition to, and should follow, the activities and standards set out in the section on initial response.

Affected resources

The main impact will be upon the CID.

Activities and standards for a special procedure investigation

ACTIVITY	STANDARDS
Scene assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine if the death is a suspected homicide as described under the section on initial response. 2. Determine if the death is a special procedure death.
Resource allocation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instruct the patrol supervision to attend and notify the detective inspector. 2. The detective inspector will attend the scene other than in exceptional circumstances, in which case he or she will retain responsibility but allocate his or her nominated detective officer to attend. 3. If there is more than one scene, for example, a home and the hospital A and E department, the detective inspector will consider the allocation of additional resources to cover the additional locations.
Report details to the OCR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather all basic details from the persons present and report these on a separate radio channel to the OCR. The patrol officer may already have gathered some of this information, such as These details are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the identity of the deceased. • what has been done to try and identify the deceased, if unidentified; • the name of the deceased's next of kin, including a telephone number where he or she can be contacted over the following 48 hours; • the time, date and place that the fact of death was diagnosed or certified, and by whom, • the circumstances, in brief, as discovered in the scene assessment; <div data-bbox="727 1522 1289 1753" style="background-color: black; height: 110px; width: 100%;"></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the deceased's GP; • details of any property retained and the reference number. 2. Always get details of the source of the information gathered.
Witness identification	

and initial accounts	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>2. Record the initial account.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
Secure the scene and preserve evidence	<p>1. Consideration will be given to a number of investigative checks being made, and, if appropriate, reasons for not requiring them to be made will be recorded. These checks include investigation of:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>2. The detective inspector, or his or her nominated detective, will have access to a policy book containing a number of possible considerations and specific procedures dependent upon the type of special procedure death being investigated. These include considering the attendance of a crime scene examiner and seizure of:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>3. The policy book will be completed by the detective, to ensure that all matters considered are fully recorded, even if the result of the enquiry is a negative one.</p> <p>4. Any item, seized as potential evidence for the coroner, should be taken, showing consideration for the bereaved parties. An explanation should be given, that it may assist in establishing how the deceased died.</p>
Record	<p>1. OCR staff will update the incident log with all the basic details and any additional information necessary.</p> <p>2. If the officer does not require any additional checks to be made, the OCR staff will record reasons why on the incident log, or leave the log open until the officer is able to complete the</p>

	<p>checks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. All incidents involving a reported death will be endorsed with the final incident code 84 to switch it through to the divisional CLO and the Criminal Record Unit 4. Certain categories of death will be endorsed with an additional final incident code to highlight the incident to the department having a special interest in that type of incident. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homicides – FMIT – 84 and 10. • Deaths of a person under 18 years – FMIT and FSU – 84. • Drugs related death – FMIT and force drugs unit – 84 and 68. • A death resulting from an accident (excluding road collisions and work related deaths) – FMIT – 84.
Mode of investigation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If, at any stage, the detective inspector is of the opinion that the death is a suspected homicide, he or she will inform the FMIT. 2. The detective inspector in consultation with the FMIT will decide the mode of investigation based upon the information and evidence gathered. It may not be possible to reach this decision for some time, for example, in a case involving the death of a child it will probably be necessary to wait until the results of a post mortem are known. 3. During this period, the detective inspector will maintain the special procedure policy book. If following consultation with the FMIT the investigation is to be conducted as a homicide investigation, the special procedure policy book shall be passed to the appointed SIO. 4. If, at any stage, the detective inspector is able to decide that, in the light of all the available evidence, the possibility of the death being a homicide can be ruled out, the investigation can be returned to the patrol officer. 5. If the patrol officer is no longer on duty, or the detective has had responsibility for the investigation for more than one tour of duty, the investigation shall be passed to the police coroners' liaison officer (CLO). 6. The special procedure policy book will be passed on to the investigating patrol officer or CLO who receives the investigation for the information of the coroner and retention with the police death report form.
Notify the Coroner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In all cases, the coroner must be informed of

	<p>the death. If the detective does not inform the coroner at the time of the incident, the CLO will be informed before the investigating officer retires from duty.</p> <p>2. The CLO will notify the coroner of all special procedure deaths under investigation.</p>
Liaison with the bereaved family	<p>1. The investigating officer will ensure the bereaved parties are kept informed of the progress of the investigation. Consideration will be given to deploying the CLO for this purpose, if he or she is available.</p>

Actions

Scene assessment

The same activities should be followed as outlined in the section on initial response.

The scene also needs to be assessed from a health and safety perspective, for example, consideration must be given to the wearing of protective clothing.

Once satisfied that the death is not a potential homicide, consideration must be given to determining whether the death is a special procedure death, as outlined in this section.

The same investigative techniques as described in the scene assessment section of the initial response are of equal value in this part of the investigation.

Special Procedure Investigations

1. Death of a person under the age of 18 years.

The death of any person who appears to be, or is believed to be, under 18 years of age, will be treated as being under 18 years of age and a special procedure investigation will take place.

2. Drug-related death

Drug-related death procedures are intended to investigate deaths where the use of illicit drugs are involved. This can assist in highlighting the availability of contaminated or high strength drugs in circulation so that a warning can be issued. It is not always possible to establish whether or not the drugs involved are illicit at the outset of an investigation. Indeed, some incidents may suggest that the drugs involved were readily available unrestricted drugs such as aspirin.

There are often cross over investigations in this area.

3. Suicide

Although suicide is not a crime, it may be that a homicide could be disguised as a suicide, or, the suicide could have been the result of bullying or harassment. In either case, a full investigation would be necessary to establish such facts.

4. Deaths resulting from an accident (excluding road collisions and work-related deaths).

These deaths would include an elderly person dying after falling at home, or in a nursing home. These also include deaths that result from accidents during DIY activities such as falls from ladders, or electrocution whilst using electrical equipment. Apart from establishing that the accident was truly a genuine accident, we have a role to play, on behalf of the coroner, in establishing the fitness for purpose of any equipment that was being used by the deceased.

Resource allocation

If the death is a special procedure death, the attending officer should notify the OCR who will arrange for the officer's supervision and detective inspector to be informed. The CID night detective inspector will be informed if it is out of hours.

The patrol will attend and manage the scene. The detective inspector attending, or his or her nominee, will assume responsibility for the investigation.

Report details to the OCR

The incident log will form the basis of any report of death that may proceed to the coroner for investigation, including all special procedure deaths. The source of the information gathered may need to be contacted again, later on in the investigation, to examine any anomalies, or to progress lines of inquiry. Therefore, it is necessary to accurately record the details of the sources of information.

Witness identification and initial accounts

The initial account can be crucial to an investigation, however, it is poor practice to have different officers repeatedly asking the same witness for his or her account. If the first officer who requests a witness's initial account records that account, any officer attending later can get details from that recorded account, rather than asking the witness to repeat the details unnecessarily.

Secure the scene and preserve evidence

A policy book has been produced to record details regarding the investigation. This will be completed by the detective and should ensure that all potential evidential details are recorded, and are available to the coroner in any coronial investigation. The document will also be of value if the investigation progresses to a homicide investigation.

The seizing of items as potential sources of evidence is supported by section 19 of PACE, as long as the officer is in the premises legally. This would invariably be under the consent of the occupier. Where consent has been denied, alternative procedures will have to be considered, including obtaining a warrant to search the premises. The seizing of items can cause additional distress to a grieving relative, carer or friend, therefore the investigating officer needs to be sensitive in communicating the need for evidence to ensure co-operation and minimise distress.

Record

In order to ensure that the basic details are recorded, the OCR staff will endorse the incident log with as much information as they are able, including any checks they are asked to facilitate. The recording of a final incident code will allow interested departments to search the system for incidents resulting in a death.

Mode of investigation

The detective inspector will be responsible for the completion of a special procedure policy book which will form the basis of an investigation on behalf of the coroner, or, if evidence calls for it, a homicide investigation. The special procedure policy book must be completed by a detective, not the patrol staff.

If, at any time, the death is considered to be a suspected homicide, the detective inspector will liaise with the FMIT and together they will decide the mode of investigation.

Notify the Coroner

The coroners have agreed to have all deaths reported to them promptly during the hours of 7.00a.m to 11.00p.m. During the night time hours, it is acceptable to delay reports of death until the following morning unless the reports could add value to the investigations, or, if a coroner's authorisation is needed, for example, for a home office pathologist to be called out.

It is the responsibility of the detective inspector to ensure the coroner is informed. If this is not done due to the time of the incident, he or she must ensure that the coroner is informed at the earliest opportunity the next day, either by the detective inspector, his or her nominee, or the CLO, if the investigation has moved to a coronial investigation.

Liaison with the bereaved family

The investigating officer must keep the bereaved family fully informed of the progress of the investigation. Lack of information can make bereaved families feel as though they are being treated as suspects, or, that as a service, we are uncaring. This can result in withholding of information and lack of co-operation.

Consideration should be given to deploying a CLO, who is experienced in this role.

INVESTIGATION ON BEHALF OF THE CORONER

Objectives

The objectives of an investigation on behalf of the coroner are to:

1. investigate the death until all possibility of homicide can be ruled out;
2. investigate the death as fully as the coroner requires;
3. gather relevant information and record all our investigations;
4. gather all potential evidence to assist the coroner.

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Historically, our investigation of deaths on behalf of the coroner has generally been of a good standard. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The activities and standards described below are in addition to, and should follow, the activities and standards set out in the section on initial response.

Affected resources

The main impact will be on the OCR radio staff and the police CLOs.

Activities and standards that should be applied when conducting an investigation on behalf of the coroner

ACTIVITY	STANDARDS
Scene assessment	1. Determine whether the death is a suspected homicide, as described under the section on initial response.

Report details to the OCR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain all basic details from the people present and report these, on a separate radio channel, to the OCR. These details are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the identity of the deceased; • what has been done to try and identify the deceased, if unidentified; • the name of the deceased's next of kin, including a telephone contact where he or she can be reached over the following 48 hours; • the time, date and place that the fact of death was diagnosed or certified, and by whom; • the brief circumstances, as discovered in the scene assessment; • details of witnesses, including the last person to see the deceased alive and when and where that was; the person finding the body of the deceased; the person identifying the deceased to the police officer; • details of the deceased's GP; • the unique reference number of any body identity bracelet used; • the location of the body; • details of any property retained and the reference number. 2. Always record details of the source of the information gathered. 3. Get a statement of identification from the person identifying the body of the deceased. Forward this, by fax if necessary, to the CLO before retiring from duty.
Record	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OCR staff will update the incident log with all the basic details and any other necessary information. 2. If the officer does not require any additional checks to be made, the OCR staff will record the reasons why on the incident log, or leave the log open until the officer is able to complete the checks. 3. All incidents involving a reported death will be endorsed with the final incident code 84 to switch it through to the divisional CLO and the Criminal Record Unit.
Investigation of the death and completion of a death report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each day, the CLO will get information from the CIH system and gather information relevant to the deaths that need to be reported to the coroner. 2. Where the death is a homicide, or a special procedure death, the CLO will liaise with the SIO to establish what level of involvement is required and to confirm whether the death has been reported to the coroner. 3. Where an SIO instructs, and for all other deaths that need to be reported to the coroner, the CLO will complete a death report form and supply it to the coroner. 4. The CLO will try to trace the relatives of the deceased, if this has not already been achieved.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The CLO will arrange and conduct any formal identification that is outstanding and get a statement of identification where one has not yet been obtained. 6. The CLO will ensure the pathologist is provided with all relevant property, such as medication. In suicide cases, the CLO will liaise with the investigating detective inspector to establish if any assistance is required in this regard. 7. The CLO will endeavour to provide any additional information required by the coroner.
Preparation for inquest hearings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the coroner requires an inquest, the coroner will formally open the proceedings after hearing details from the CLO. 2. The CLO will be responsible for the preparation of inquest files. Obtaining as much evidence as they consider useful to the coroner and, where his or her legal powers permit, any additional evidence requested by the coroner.
Return of property seized during the investigation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the exception of homicide cases, the CLO is responsible for releasing any property seized during an investigation to the person proving entitlement. The proof will normally be a Grant of Letters of Administration or Grant of Probate from the Probate Court or Probate Registry. 2. When property is returned, consideration for the bereaved should be shown. A check should be made with the bereaved person to see if he or she wants it back, and if so, all official police or coroners' labels should be removed. The item should be presentable before it is returned to the bereaved.
Monitoring rota funeral directors and companies authorised to transport bodies to the mortuary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The police will, at the request of the coroner, place the contact details of funeral directors and companies authorised to transport bodies to mortuaries on an approved call-out rota held at local OCRs. 2. Any firm accepting a call-out is expected to arrive at the scene within one hour from the time it accepted the call-out, and is expected to send two attendants unless the firm has been advised differently by the OCR staff. 3. Any failure to comply with the minimum standard shall be reported by the patrol officer at the scene, if he or she is still present. 4. The OCR shall record the report on the incident log. 5. The CLO will pass details of non-compliance to the coroner. 6. The coroner shall record all incidents of non-compliance and monitor them, removing from the approved OCR list any firms that persistently fail to comply.

Actions

Scene assessment

The same activities should be followed as outlined in the section on initial response. The scene needs to be assessed from a health and safety perspective, for example, protective clothing should be worn, if appropriate.

The procedures outlined in this section must not be followed until:

- the attending patrol officer; and
- any attending supervisor or detective;

is completely satisfied that there are no grounds to suspect the death is a homicide.

Report details to the OCR

The OCR radio operators have a list of nine points which they will act as prompts to ensure that basic information is gathered by the attending patrol officer. It may be that the patrol officer cannot ascertain at the time the answer to some of the questions asked. If so, the radio operator can record what steps the officer has taken to try and get the information, so that there is no duplication of effort by the CLO who picks up the investigation later.

It is important that the details of the person providing any information are noted. In the past, these details have sometimes not been noted, and this has made it difficult to expand upon the initial information when it has proved necessary to do so.

The identification process is vital to a coroner's investigation and this starts with the patrol officer identifying the deceased. The patrol officer will complete a written statement of identification, including details of the relationship to the deceased of the person identifying the body, and details of the identity of the deceased, together with when, and where, the identification took place. This statement must be given to the CLO before retiring from duty, by fax if necessary, with the original being forwarded by internal mail.

In cases where relatives or carers are present and the body of the deceased is in a suitable condition, that means, it is not decomposed or has thin tissue skin, the patrol officer can place a uniquely numbered and endorsed identity bracelet on the wrist of the body. Before placing the bracelet on the body of the deceased, the attending patrol officer will endorse the bracelet with:

- the name of the deceased;
- the date of birth, or approximate age, of the deceased;
- the PIN of the officer to whom the identification has been made;
- the signature of the officer to whom the identification has been made.

The patrol officer will then arrange for a funeral director on the rota to attend to take the deceased to the mortuary before leaving the deceased with the relatives.

This procedure has been developed to allow officers to return to patrol duties at the earliest opportunity, however, it may not be appropriate in all cases. Consideration must be given to the relatives and whether they can cope with being left alone with the body, or if they have other people around them for support.

If the body arrives at the mortuary without a bracelet, or with an illegible bracelet, the mortuary staff will contact the OCR and the patrol officer will have to attend the mortuary to provide continuity of identification.

The OCR should be advised of what has been done.

Record

In order to ensure that the basic details are recorded, the OCR will endorse the incident log with as much information as possible, including any checks they are asked to facilitate. The recording of a final incident code will allow a search of the system for incidents resulting in a death.

Investigation of the death and completion of a death report

The death report form has been amended to include information that assists the coroner. Many of the basic details will be contained in the incident log on the CIH. Each working day, the CLO will gather information from the CIH system, to establish which deaths require further investigation on behalf of the coroner. In some cases, such as homicides, or fatal road traffic collisions, the CLO will need to liaise with the SIO before conducting an investigation. For all the deaths where the CLO is to report the death to the coroner, he or she will complete a death report form and supply a copy to the coroner. If the coroner orders a post mortem to be conducted, the CLO will arrange for a copy of the form to be provided to the pathologist.

The CLO will assist when relatives of the deceased need to be traced and provide the pathologist with relevant items of property such as medication.

In suicide cases, the CLO will, where instructed by the investigating detective inspector, provide the pathologist with relevant property such as ropes or medication.

In cases where a statement of identification has not been obtained by the patrol officer or investigating officer, the CLO will arrange for an identification to be conducted at the mortuary and obtain a statement from the person identifying the deceased.

Preparation for inquest hearings

The CLO will provide information to the coroner so that they may formally open an inquest. Where the CLO has reported a death to the coroner and an inquest has been ordered, the CLO will compile a file of evidence. The content of the file will be determined with the direction of the coroner. Apart from the immediate relatives and people involved in the incident resulting in the death, it is advisable to interview and get a statement from the person who had the closest relationship with the deceased. This may be a friend, a partner or a work colleague, or any other person who had a relationship with the deceased. This approach could prevent a situation where detailed information is heard for the first time during the inquest hearing.

Return of property seized during the investigation

Except in homicide cases, the CLO will be responsible for the return of property brought into police control. Legal documentation, normally a Grant of Letters of Administration or Grant of Probate from the Probate Court or Probate Registry, is required in situations where there may be a dispute over entitlement.

The deceased's relatives might not want items seized whilst investigating a death to be returned, for example, a hosepipe used to conduct exhaust fumes from an exhaust pipe into a car, or a baby's feeding bottle. Other items could however be welcomed back such as a cot blanket or personal papers. Returning property after a long period of time can cause renewed grief to the bereaved. If due consideration is given to this, and steps are taken to reduce it, such as the removal of police labels, this will make the event less upsetting.

Monitoring funeral directors on the rota list

The coroners have imposed certain minimum standards on operators wishing to be included on the rota list. The minimum standards are:

- attending the scene within one hour of accepting the call-out;
- sending two attendants, unless advised otherwise by the OCR.

Any failure to comply with these minimum standards will be noted by the patrol officer if he or she is still in attendance, and shall be reported to the OCR who shall endorse the failure on the incident log.

In cases where the patrol officer has left the scene before the attendance of the operator the CLO will perform a service recovery role and ascertain from the bereaved if the minimum standards were met by the attending operators. All incidents where there was a failure to meet the minimum standard will be reported by the CLO to the coroner, who shall consider the position of the operators on the rota list.

DOCTOR ISSUING AN MCCD

Objectives

The objectives of issuing an MCCD are to:

- investigate the death until all possibility of homicide can be ruled out;
- provide an efficient, effective and professional service to the community;
- assist in tracing the next of kin of the deceased;
- arrange for the safe keeping of any property.

Most deaths dealt with by GMP fall into this section, our involvement having been instigated by the initial caller requesting some emergency help because of concern for someone's welfare, or because he or she did not know what to do when someone died.

Having become involved, our role is to investigate whether the death is a homicide or not and to help the bereaved person to access the services he or she needs. Also, we can help to trace the next of kin and ensure that any property is kept safe.

Where the deceased's doctor is able to issue a medical certificate of the cause of death (MCCD), and the officer is satisfied that there are no grounds to suspect a homicide, there is generally little more for the police to contribute to the management of the incident. Previously, we have failed to record properly how many cases we investigated fell into this category. The proposed procedures are designed to rectify that situation. The activities and standards described below are in addition to, and should follow, the activities and standards set out in the section on initial response.

Affected resources

The main impact will be upon the OCR staff and the patrol officers.

Activities and standards that should be applied by whoever deals with a death where the deceased's doctor is able to issue an MCCD

ACTIVITY	STANDARD
Scene assessment	1. Determine whether the death is a potential homicide, as described under the section on initial response.
Gather and record information	1. Gather all relevant information. As a minimum, this will be the basic information that will be recorded on the incident log. 2. Any additional information, including enquiries made, should also be passed to the OCR.
Assist the bereaved	1. Provide any assistance we can such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contacting the deceased's doctor;• tracing and contacting the next of kin;• keeping property safe;• arranging for an undertaker from the rota list to remove the body to a funeral home if required.
Update the OCR	1. Inform the OCR of the status of the death and basic details established. 2. Endorse the incident log with all relevant information regardless of whether or not the enquiries were

	successful.
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Scene assessment

The same activities should be followed as outlined in the section on initial response. The scene needs to be assessed from a health and safety perspective., for example, protective clothing should be worn if appropriate.

Gather and record information

Although this death is not going to be reported to the coroner, our involvement needs to be professional and withstand any future scrutiny. To ensure sufficient information is retained, the patrol officer must get all basic details regarding the death, together with any information regarding enquiries made and passed on to the OCR.

Assist the bereaved

We are committed to providing a customer focused service, showing respect and professionalism in our service delivery. Many bereaved people find difficulty in coping during the initial period following a death, and we will provide whatever assistance we can. This may include contacting the deceased's doctor, or tracing his or her relatives.

If the bereaved person does not know any funeral directors, we can, if required, arrange for a funeral director from the rota list, to attend at the expense of the bereaved.

If there are no responsible relatives available, any property must be secured, and all valuable items removed for safekeeping.

Update the OCR

The patrol officer will inform the OCR of the status of the death, together with the basic details, and any enquiries made, even if the information obtained as a result of the enquiries was negative. This will help to show that our enquiries have been sufficiently thorough to justify our involvement, and closure of the police investigation. The OCR staff will endorse the incident log with details and close it.

Additional items relating to the investigation and reporting of deaths

1. Identification of the deceased's body

Unless the coroner specifies otherwise, the deceased person must be identified to the pathologist at a mortuary in all cases where a criminal investigation is likely to follow, or is already ongoing. In all other cases, the identification may be made to a mortuary attendant. The patrol officer, investigating officer or CLO will normally do this.. However, the coroners have agreed that fixing a legible identity bracelet, completed by the patrol officer, to the deceased's wrist will be sufficient in cases where no criminal investigation is ongoing.

2. Identification deferred to the Coroner's liaison officer

If the identification is deferred to the CLO, they should:

- contact the mortuary and arrange for the deceased to be moved to the viewing area in the mortuary;
- accompany the person making the identification; the body may be identified by next of kin or other relative, or another person with enough knowledge of the deceased to be able to make the identification;
- arrange for the person carrying out the identification to be accompanied by a friend or other relative;
- ask the person identifying the deceased: "can you identify this person as being....?";
- once the identification has been made, depending upon how distressed the next of kin is, take an identification statement in a nearby room or suitable area away from the deceased.

3. Where a body is not immediately identified

If a body is not immediately identified, the patrol officer should:

- circulate a full description of the body, its clothing and any other information which may help;
- arrange for photographs to be taken before the post mortem examination, if practicable, with the body clothed as it was found;
- arrange for fingerprints to be taken.

The Press Office, within the Corporate Communications Branch on extension 62230, can assist in trying to trace relatives of deceased people. Also, in publicising details of any deceased person whose identity cannot be established, for this purpose they should be provided with the following details about the body:

- ♦ approximate age and height;
- ♦ gender;
- ♦ general description and details of any distinguishing marks;
- ♦ where the body was found.

A photograph of the deceased may be of value to assist in any publication. However, in the interests of decency, sometimes an artist's impression made from the photograph may be more appropriate, depending on the physical condition of the corpse – the Press Office will give further information if required..

4. Police responsibilities at post mortem examinations

Although GMP staff work with pathologists during a post mortem, we should not normally actively help at such examinations. Our role is to see that the examination is conducted on the right body, to prevent a breach of the peace, and to stop unauthorised people entering the room.

5. Death of a Commonwealth citizen

Tell the appropriate High Commission about the death of a Commonwealth Citizen whose death is being investigated. This does not apply to UK citizens.

6. Deaths resulting from unnatural causes

All deaths resulting from unnatural causes may have to be the subject of a coroner's inquest, so you should retain all clothing and footwear in case it is required. Pass details of the items and property reference numbers to the coroner's liaison officer.

Deaths involving water, gas or electricity will need to be reported to the utility company concerned so that it can fulfil its obligation to report the matter to the Department of Trade and Industry. The particular utility service concerned will also assist in situations where there is an ongoing danger to the public, to make the scene safe.

Officer at the scene of a death resulting from unnatural causes

In addition to your responsibilities regarding investigation of the death, you should contact the utility supplier involved and inform it of the name and address of the deceased, together with the location and basic details of the incident. Some useful numbers are :

Incidents involving water

0845 746 2200

Incidents involving gas

0800 111 999

Incidents involving electricity

0800 195 1452

7. Incidents involving water

This policy has been agreed by Greater Manchester Fire Service and the Joint Underwater Search Unit.

Roles of Fire Service and Joint Underwater Search Unit (JUSU) - recovery of a body

Greater Manchester Fire Service is not responsible for recovering bodies from water. If you attend an incident where a body needs to be recovered from water, you should request the attendance of the JUSU as soon as possible.

The Fire Service will only consider entering water to remove a casualty or a body before the arrival of the JUSU if:

- ♦ there is the possibility of saving life;
- ♦ the body is in moving water and may be lost; or
- ♦ the police are unable to secure the area, and failure to remove the body would cause unnecessary distress to relatives, residents or passers-by.

If a vehicle thought to contain occupants is seen to enter water, the Fire Service will attend and make a rescue attempt within its capabilities.

In any event, the Fire Service will not attempt sub-surface rescues from water or ice, for which they are neither trained nor equipped.

Fire Service Control will ask for the JUSU to be informed, through the direct line to the police, when it receives calls requesting the Fire Service to deal with water-related incidents involving people, such as where a person has fallen in.

If the Fire Service arrives at an incident and finds that it involves a body or sub-surface incident, it will ask for the JUSU to attend.

8. Death on the Railways

Whenever a death occurs on railway property, the British Transport Police will deal with the incident and report the death to the coroner. We will help if we are asked to do so.

If we receive a call from the public, we will attend and begin to deal with the incident. The British Transport Police officers will take over when they arrive.

9. Body sheets

Body sheets are available to be used when handling bodies or remains. These sheets are issued to divisions.

10. Bereavement counselling

On many occasions when we are dealing with sudden death, the bereaved may benefit from counselling and help that we cannot provide. Funeral directors have access to far more information on this area of expertise and bereaved parties can be advised to seek advice from their chosen funeral director.

The CLO may have copies of the 'Bereaved Relatives Support Scheme' leaflet that they can provide to relatives of the deceased. This gives answers to many common questions and explains how people deal with a death. It also gives the contact numbers for organisations that offer help during bereavement.

11. Deaths in diplomatic premises and deaths of diplomats

Officer at the scene of a death of a diplomat or on diplomatic premises

You have a Common Law right of access to any premises, including diplomatic premises, in order to preserve life and limb.

Generally, we have restricted access to certain diplomatic premises and need to seek the authority of the embassy concerned to interview any of its staff on the premises. Similarly, certain diplomats have a protected status anywhere, which might need to be waived by the embassy concerned, before they could be interviewed. If you are uncertain as to your rights of access, contact Special Branch at Chester House, Tel. [] for advice.

If you deal with a death where you establish the deceased is a diplomat, deal with the incident as outlined previously, depending on the circumstances of the death. You should also contact the Special Branch for advice.

Special Branch officer

Where you are informed that an officer is dealing with the death of a diplomat, you should make contact with the relevant diplomatic liaison point and advise the officer accordingly.

Where you are informed that an officer wants to make enquiries at diplomatic premises regarding a death, you should make contact with the relevant diplomatic liaison point and advise the officer accordingly.

12. Industrial accidents or incidents and work related deaths

Industrial accident or incident

If the accident or incident is not fatal, or likely to prove fatal, and you are satisfied there are no criminal or suspicious circumstances, there is no need for any further police involvement. You should remind the employer that he or she is responsible for telling the HSE about the accident. You should not normally preserve or arrange to photograph any accident scene unless this is needed for a death report.

OCR Staff

Where you receive notification of a work-related death, or an incident where there is a strong likelihood of death resulting from an industrial incident, in addition to directing a patrol officer to the scene, you should send a detective inspector; or in their absence, a detective sergeant.

Officer at the scene of a work related death

A patrol officer attending an incident involving a work-related death, or an incident where life threatening injuries occur, should:

- ♦ administer first aid, if appropriate, and ensure an ambulance has been called;
- ♦ identify, secure, preserve and take control of the scene and any other relevant place;
- ♦ supervise and record all activity;
- ♦ inform a senior supervisory officer of the rank of inspector or above, and ask for the Detective Inspector to attend;
- ♦ ensure the employer or other responsible person in control of the premises or activity has informed the HSE, Local Authority, other investigating or enforcing authority;
- ♦ contact and discuss the incident with the HSE, the local authority or other enforcing authority, and agree arrangements for controlling the scene, considering access for other services, and to ensure the safety of the public.

Patrol supervisor

You should attend the scene of all work related deaths. You should assist the officer at the scene with advice and manage the scene deploying resources appropriately.

Detective officer

You should attend the scene of a work related death. When you arrive, you should:

- ♦ make an initial assessment about whether the circumstances might justify a charge of manslaughter, or other serious criminal offence and, if so, start an investigation;
- ♦ make sure the HSE has been told about the death or injury; the employer or other person in control of the premises is responsible for telling the HSE about the death or injury; if this has not been done, make sure the HSE is informed immediately of the incident;
- ♦ liaise with the HSE representative and tell him or her whether there will be a police investigation;
- ♦ discuss with the HSE what assistance we can give to their investigation, when your initial assessment indicates there will not be a police investigation;
- ♦ consider involving another independent police force with the investigation at an early stage in cases of any GMP work related death, or an incident where life threatening injuries occur to any GMP employee, people employed on behalf of GMP or any person or people working on property owned by GMP.

Advice before charge

Following your investigation, you must get advice from the CPS before charging any individual with any serious criminal offence arising out of a work related death, for example, charging an individual with manslaughter, or a company with corporate manslaughter.

Decision to prosecute

With reference to the Code for Crown Prosecutors, the decision to prosecute any serious offence arising out of a work-related death will be taken by the CPS, for example, an individual with manslaughter, or a company with corporate manslaughter.

The decision will be made following discussion with the police and, if appropriate, the HSE, the local authority or other enforcing agency.

Work related deaths protocol

'Work Related Deaths – A Protocol for Liaison' is a booklet compiled and published by the Health and Safety Executive. The booklet sets out the liaison procedure between the five signatory organisations about work related deaths. In particular, it deals with incidents where evidence suggests a serious crime such as manslaughter may have been committed. The signatories are:

- the Local Government Association;
- the Association of Police Officers;
- the Health and Safety Executive (HSE);
- the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); and
- British Transport Police

We have sent copies of this document to:

- ♦ Operational Communications Rooms;

- ♦ divisional commanders;
- ♦ crime managers; and
- ♦ divisional detective inspectors.

An electronic version has been placed on the intranet in the V Department Library under the heading 'Deaths'.

Additional responsibilities for OCR and CLO staff

Additional responsibilities for OCR staff

You will create a FWIN where the movement of human remains through a port such as Manchester International Airport is reported to you. This FWIN will not require the same pre determined information to be recorded as a report of death.

Additional responsibilities for coroners liaison officers

1. Social services burial

It is the duty of the local social services department to bury or cremate the body of any person if no suitable arrangements have been made. If you are dealing with such a case, you should contact the social services who will make the necessary arrangements.

2. Social services disposing of property

When the social services accept responsibility for disposing of the deceased's property, we must give them any property that we have.

If the social services do not accept responsibility for handling the deceased's property you should fill in a 'Duchy form' (form BV1), or a 'Treasury form' (form BV1A), in duplicate. You can get these forms and details of where to send them, from the Administration Unit.

The property will be disposed of as directed by the Duchy of Lancaster or the Treasury Solicitor. Any money which belonged to the deceased should be paid into the Police Authority Account, until we receive instructions on disposing of it.

3. Intestate death

If a deceased person has no surviving blood relatives, his or her estate passes to the Duchy of Lancaster or the Treasury Solicitor depending on the area. When a case comes to our notice, you should contact the social services.

Property inventory

If you are dealing with an intestate death, you should:

- go to the premises with another officer;
- make an inventory of the property to be included in a form of indemnity;
- take small valuables, money and the premises key and enter them in the property system; and
- ensure the premises have been secured.

4. Pension books

We normally send pension books and identity documents to the authorities that issued them, if we are instructed to do so by the Duchy of Lancaster or the Treasury Solicitor. If the social services has accepted responsibility, the pension books and identity documents should be sent to them.

War Pension Books should be sent to the coroner.

5. Hospital deaths

When a person is pronounced dead on arrival at hospital, an officer from the division where the hospital is will attend. He or she should investigate the death as per the

instructions in the sections report of a death and initial response and carry out any other actions necessary at the time, such as if relatives are present arranging for a formal identification. The CLO from the area where the person was removed from will make any follow up enquiries to assist the coroner. If at any time you have cause to suspect criminality, or that the death is a special category death, you shall report the matter immediately to the detective inspector on duty.

If an inpatient dies in hospital and the doctor is unable to issue a certificate as to the medical cause of death, the hospital authorities will arrange a post mortem and be responsible for tracing the relatives. If after the post mortem the coroner orders an inquest he or she will contact the CLO who will prepare a file of evidence for the inquest on behalf of the coroner. If at any time during the investigation you have cause to suspect criminality or that the death is a special category death you shall report the matter immediately to the detective inspector on duty.

