



Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) Statute

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Chief Medical Examiner of Guam

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Acting Medical Examiner of Guam

The office was formed back in 1971 under the guidance of the 11th Guam Legislature and approved by the people of Guam and then Governor Carlos G. Camacho.

It was established to provide a scientific investigative system for the island of Guam on deaths which occurred suddenly without cause or from unnatural circumstances.

The office is controlled by the *Commission on Post-mortem Examinations* which is made up of the Attorney General of Guam, the Guam Police Department Chief, Public Health & Social services Director, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority Administrator, the Guam Medical Society President, and the current Chief Medical Examiner. (Guam Code Annotated Title 10 Part 2 Division 4 Chapter 81)

In addition, OCME is guided by the Rules and Regulations formulated by the Commission on Post-mortem Examinations, Guam Code Annotated Title 10 §81102 & 81109 which were filed with the Guam Legislative Secretary on May 18, 1981 and for uniformity purpose a new numbering system was adopted and now known as 26 Guam Administrative Rules & Regulation (GAR) Division 3 Chapter 20.

To view the law in its entirety, please visit: www.guamcourts.org/CompilerofLaws

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MISSION

Our purpose is to determine a true cause and manner of death by conducting medico-legal death investigations, autopsies, toxicology & specimen analysis on all unnatural & unusual deaths, such as but not limited to homicides, suicides, accidents, sudden unexpected deaths that occurred in a suspicious manner or caused by an unrecognizable disease. In addition, postmortem examinations must also be done on individuals who expire outside of a hospital facility or less than 24 hours after admission to a hospital facility and whose body is to be shipped off island, cremated, or buried at sea. OCME provides support to Guam’s public health and safety.

Initiatives & Community Benefits

- ✚ **Efficiently** perform Medico-Legal Death Investigations.
- ✚ **Accurately** establish a factual explanation of the evidence for every death investigation.
- ✚ **Increase** public awareness of the importance of a medico-legal death investigation.
- ✚ **Output** statistical reports and Medico-legal investigation results to the public through the local Medias.
- ✚ **Maintain** a Neutral and Non-biased interpretation of the evidence found during a medico-legal death investigation.

“The Chief Medical Examiner’s office works to provide a reasonable explanation to the cause and manner of death for a deceased person based on the evidence obtained during a postmortem examination. We maintain that all interpretations of the evidence uncovered by the medico-legal death investigations are neutral by its nature.”

DEFINITIONS:

- Postmortem Examination:** An examination of an individual after death for the purpose to determine a true cause and manner of death.
- Medico-legal Death Investigation:** The investigative process utilizing protocols & techniques to determine the cause and manner of death of a deceased individual by skilled practitioners’ e.g. medical examiner, death investigator, police officer.
- Autopsy:** A surgical procedure performed by a licensed physician on a deceased person.
- Non-Autopsy:** A non-surgical external examination performed by a licensed physician on a deceased person.

Our Performance *(What We Have Been Doing)*

FY2015

OUTPUT: Postmortem examination results, certification of deaths, & exam reports are completed in a timely fashion. Annual statistical reports are prepared and submitted to Guam's Bureau of Statistics & Planning for their annual publication. In addition, monthly reports on Suicide cases are compiled and submitted to Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center for their Suicide Prevention Program. Other statistical reports on other death cases are prepared as requested by individual(s) or entity. Academic presentations are conducted to high school & post-secondary students, law enforcement, physicians, attorneys, etc. by the Medical Examiner upon request.

OCME has an active **Student Internship and Job Shadowing Program** for current post-secondary students studying in the fields of Criminal Justice, Law, Public Administration, Biology, Medicine, & Nursing. In 2015, OCME had six (06) student interns and two (02) job shadowing students from colleges on & off island. Student interns are tasked with an array of duties along with upfront exposure to postmortem examinations and medico-death investigation procedures. Under the job shadowing program, students observe the Chief Medical Examiner conduct postmortem examinations and any other duties he may perform.

Distribution by "Manner of Death"

(Autopsy Cases)			Average of years
MANNER OF DEATH	2014	2015	
Natural	36	29	32.5
Suicide	2	7	4.5
Homicide	9	6	7.5
Accident - Drowning	17	13	15
Accident - Motor Vehicle	14	8	11
Accident - Aircraft Or Industrial	0	0	0
Other Types Of Accidents	1	10	5.5
Could Not Be Determined	4	3	3.5
TOTAL AUTOPSIED CASES:	83	76	79.5

Distribution by "Manner of Death"

(Non-Autopsy Cases)			Average of years
MANNER OF DEATH	2014	2015	
Natural	482	563	522.5
Suicide	27	29	28
Accident - Drowning	2	1	1.5
Accident - Motor Vehicle	5	1	3
Other Types Of Accidents	4	3	3.5
TOTAL NON-AUTOPSIED CASES:	520	597	558.5

In 2015, OCME conducted a total of 673 postmortem examinations and issued 674 Certification of Death reports. We also issued non-autopsy, autopsy, and/or toxicology reports, Verification of Death notices, and Certification of a Non-communicable Disease letters upon request at no cost to the recipients.

Of the 673 postmortem examinations conducted 405 deaths were those of the **MALE** gender. There were 592 postmortem examinations performed on deaths resulting from **NATURAL** causes. The top natural cause of death examined in 2015 was that of **HEART DISEASE** at 261 deaths of which 159 were of the male gender. The number two natural cause of death was **CANCER** at 101 deaths followed by lung, brain, liver, & kidney diseases, sepsis (bacterial infection), and so forth.

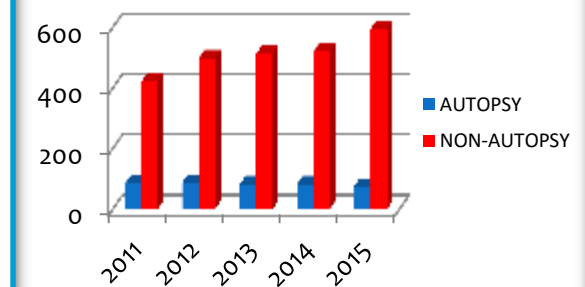
MEDICO-LEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

(FIVE YEAR BREAKDOWN)

TYPE OF PROCEDURES	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Autopsies	85	89	83	83	76
Non-Autopsies	423	499	513	520	597
Presumptive Death Certificate Issued	0	0	0	0	0
Death Certificate Issued (Military Affiliated)	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL CME CASES:	509	588	596	603	674

Based on the above chart, there was a 12% increase comparing 2014 and 2015.

FIVE YEAR BREAKDOWN



Statistical data are compiled by calendar year and are based on postmortem examination dates.

Financial Facts

FY2015

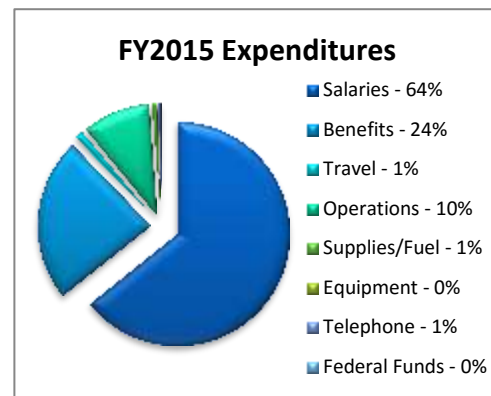
100% Funded by the General Funds Annually

Federal Grant Awarded within FY2015

OCME's OPERATIONS:

- **Off-Island Travel and Professional Development cost:** Exclusively for the Medical Examiner for his yearly continuing education courses and membership fees as prescribed in his current employment Agreement.
- **Locum Tenens Contract:** Acting Medical Examiner professional services contract to cover the Medical Examiner during absence of more than three (03) days which is renewed every fiscal year averaging \$3,000 per year.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Intra-department work order between Guam Memorial Hospital Authority (GMHA) & OCME for services such as but not limited to power, water, laboratory, housekeeping, etc. renewed annually at \$36,000. Contract amount may change when cost of services increase by GMHA.

TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS			ACTUAL EXPENDITURES			
CATEGORIES	FY2014	FY2015	CATEGORIES	FY2014	FY2015	
General Funds	Salaries	\$263,667	\$265,953	Salaries	\$263,666.16	265,827.95
	Benefits	93,727	97,516	Benefits	93,727.35	97,516.25
	Travel	3,421	4,248	Travel	2,460.09	4,890.13
	Operations	41,005	41,459	Operations	39,404.83	40,759
	Supplies & Fuel	2,504	2,813	Supplies & Fuel	2,501.30	2,812.26
	Equipment	184	0	Equipment	184	0
	Telephone	1,672	1,833	Telephone	1,671.86	1,630.12
	Federal Funds	0	71,808	Federal Funds	0	336.70
	Total:	\$405,856	\$419,196	Total:	\$403,615.59	\$413,772.41



OCME has continued to spend within its total appropriated budget for both years and spend less than appropriated in an effort to decrease the government's deficit without jeopardizing the agency's mission. Budget approvals are appropriated non-itemized allowing the agency to handle where funding will be allocated throughout the year with direct supervision of the Bureau of Budget Management & Research (BBMR) and the approval of the Governor of Guam. In addition, there was a 15% Reserve (*Not allotted funding*) placed on agency's budget by BBMR in an effort to reduce the government's current deficit.

SIGNIFICANT VARIATION OF TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO ACTUAL EXPENDITURES

In FY2015, OCME spent 3% more than the previous year and managed to save \$5,424 from its total appropriations for the fiscal year. The 3% expenditure was for increases with Salary & Benefit of two staff, Travel airfare and per diem rates, & Operation expenses. No salary increase was received by the Medical Examiner or Acting Medical Examiner. In addition, there was no equipment acquired through the general funds for FY2015.

FEDERAL FUNDING

FY2015 FEDERAL GRANT AWARD: Federal grant awarded on March 19, 2015 from the U. S. Department of Interior (DOI), Office of Insular Affairs'(OIA) through their Maintenance Assistance Program (MAP) a federal grant of \$71,808.00 to acquire an agency specialized vehicle and for the upgrade of office & autopsy equipment. Federal Grant award will commence by FY2018.

*The last awarded federal grant was back in FY2004 for office and autopsy equipment funded by the U. S. Department of Interior (DOI), Office of Insular Affairs' (OIA) through the Compact of Free Association (COFA) funds. A few of the acquired office and autopsy equipment during this period are still being used however deteriorated.

Future Challenges & Outlooks

FY2015

Exciting News....

The **Medical Examiner**, Dr. Aurelio A. Espinola has renewed his employment contract for another three (03) years ending in 2019 with the option to renew on a yearly basis thereon.

Our **Student Internship and Job Shadowing** program continues to prosper with highly intrigued students in the field of Forensic, Anatomical, & Clinical Pathology, Medicine, and death investigation. The program continues to academically progress.

Moving Forward....

We continue to maintain the upmost professional and sympathetic services to the people of Guam during their time of grief and loss of their loved one.

Preparations to secure a successor for the Chief Medical Examiner position are in progress.

We hope to address the following concerns in the near future:

- ★ Inadequate Personnel / Staff.
- ★ Limited & Hazardous workplace.
- ★ Replacement of Cadaver Lift and Morgue Refrigeration Units.
- ★ Upgrade Morgue Facility and its entirety.

Hours of Operations

Monday – Friday

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

CLOSED ON:

Lunch Hour (**One Hour**)

Weekends

Government of Guam Holidays

Location

We are located within the Guam Memorial Hospital Compound at the back side pass the Emergency Room area
(Morgue Area- 2nd Floor)

Our Island!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Please let us know by contacting our office by telephone (671) 646-9363/647-2369, email to cme.guam@gmail.com, or write us at #325 Duenas Drive, Tamuning, Guam 96913.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME