

Policy Title:	IN-MORGUE VIEWING OF DECEDENT REMAINS		
Category:	2 - Patient Rights	Policy No.:	220
Originally Issued:	3/1/2005	Update (U)/Revised (R):	04/13/17
Distribution:	Hospital-Wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If not Hospital-Wide, Other:	

PURPOSE:

To comply with the request of the legal next of kin or significant others to view the body of the deceased under stipulated conditions.

DEFINITION(S):

None

POLICY:

In-Morgue viewing of decedent remains (excluding newborns and infants) will only be permitted within 24 hours of the time of death and under the following stipulated conditions:

1. Upon family/significant other initiated request, when the family/significant others did not see the decedent before removal to the morgue.
2. Upon family/significant other initiated request, when the legal next of kin has authorized County disposition (cremation).
3. For positive identification purpose when referral is made by law enforcement agencies or social workers.
4. Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding County holidays.
5. Only one viewing per decedent will be conducted.
6. Exceptions to this policy will be at the discretion of Hospital and Medical Administration.

PROCEDURE:

1. Nursing, Social Work or Medical Records staff will receive the written "Request to View Decedent Remains" from next of kin or significant others and immediately submit completed form to the Anatomic Pathology Office (1A133, x3532) to maintain on file.
2. Social Work and the Anatomic Pathology Office staff will confer regarding the time needed to prepare for the viewing.
3. Social Work will coordinate, with the Anatomic Pathology Office and the next of kin/significant others to arrange a viewing time.

4. A Histology staff member will prepare the viewing area by hanging a sign on the corridor door indicating "Viewing in Progress – Do Not Disturb" and by removing any extraneous equipment from the viewing area.
5. The Histology staff member will compare the name and other identifying information on the viewing request with the morgue identification tag and arm identification to ensure that they are identical.
6. The Histology staff member will remove the body from the crypt and place it on a stretcher. In preparation for viewing, the Histology staff member will:
 - a. Expose the head, clean the face, and attempt to close mouth and eyes, if needed
 - b. Place a pillow with clean pillow cover under the head and make the deceased's appearance as presentable as possible.
 - c. Cover the body with a clean sheet pulled up to the chin.
7. The Histology staff member will close the drape behind the body to obscure the rest of the Morgue from the view.
8. Social Work will take the family into the viewing area while the viewing doors are still closed and knock on the Morgue door when the family is ready.
9. At the knock, the Histology staff member will open the viewing doors and step back behind the drape, maintaining professional conduct appropriate for the circumstance. The inside Morgue door is to remain closed and locked during the viewing.
10. Approximately 15 to 20 minutes will be allowed for the viewing, at which time the Histology staff member will step forward and close the viewing doors.
11. After the viewing, Social Work will direct the family to the corridor. All questions concerning the decedent should be referred to the appropriate Department or Medical Service.
12. The Histology staff member will return the body to its original location in the crypt, remove the "Do Not Disturb" sign, and return the used linen to the Linen Room obtaining a clean replacement set for the next viewing.

ATTACHMENTS/FORMS:

Request to View Decedent Remains (Attachment 1)

REFERENCE(S)/AUTHORITY:

None

APPROVED BY:

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