

5. Role of a Forensic Pathologist

A. Investigative personnel, usually medical examiners or coroners, who investigate the cause, manner, & time of death of crime victim.

(1) medical examiner - appointed official who is usually a physician who is a board-certified pathologist.

(2) coroner - elected official (may or may not have a medical degree)

B. tasked w/ examining a case for cause (autopsy), manner of death, & recording findings on a death certificate

C. crime scene investigation

(1) protect crime scene & body

(2) remove the body in medically acceptable manner
decedent

D. Autopsy - surgical procedure performed by a pathologist on a decedent to ascertain (from the body, organs, & bodily fluids, the cause of death

(1) 2 types

(a) clinical/hospital - focus on internal findings & medical conditions

(b) forensic/medicolegal - focus on external & internal findings, determine cause of death, confirm manner of death, for criminal proceedings

(2) Evidence from an Autopsy - collected & sent to lab

(a) clothing

(b) fingernail clippings/scrapings

(c) combings of hair & pubic area

(d) buccal (cheek) swab for DNA

(e) vaginal, anal, & oral swabs (sex crimes)

(f) recovered bullets

(g) swabs of body areas (ex breasts or penis) suspected of having DNA from being touched or saliva

(h) swab hands from shooting victims

FIVE STAR.
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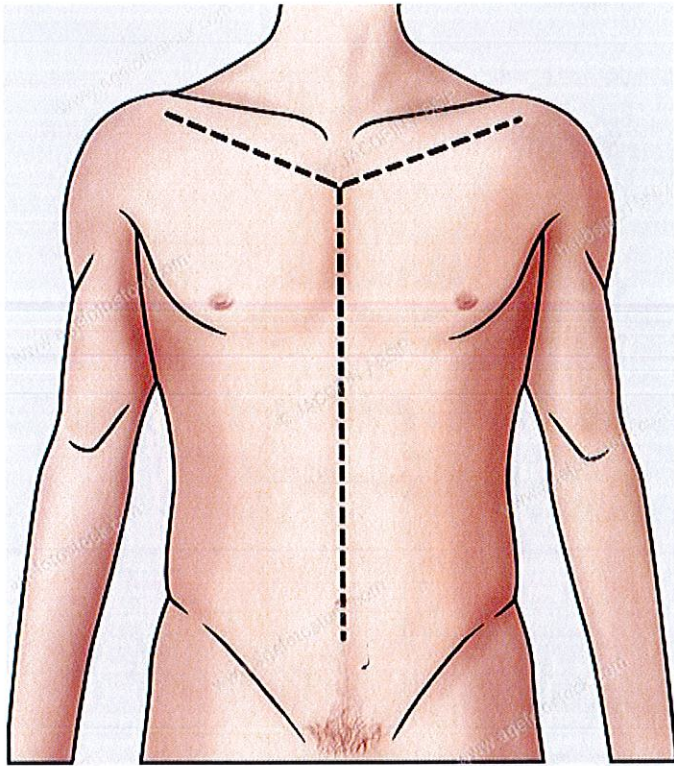
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(3) External Exam

- 1st overall condition of body & clothing
- 2nd general characteristics
 - ↳ sex, height, weight, approx. age, hair color, & physical condition
 - ↳ tattoos, scars, previous surgeries, evidence of drug use
- 3rd classify injuries
- 4th x-rays

(4) Internal Exam

- ↳ Removal of all internal organs thru a Y-shaped incision - starts @ each shoulder & extending down to the pubic bone
- ↳ exam of cranium
 - removal of brain
- ↳ stomach contents
- ↳ toxicology - samples of blood usually taken from the inferior vena cava (large vein inside the lower abdomen)



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