

## **Kings County Coroner's Department/Morgue**

### **SYNOPSIS**

The purpose of this report is to provide a general overview of the Kings County Coroner's Department/Morgue.

### **WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED**

Public interest. The Coroner's Department/Morgue has not been investigated for several years.

### **AUTHORITY**

California Penal Code 925. The Grand Jury may at anytime investigate any County agency.

### **METHOD OF INVESTIGATION**

The Grand Jury interviewed the Chief Deputy Coroner, followed by a visit to the County Morgue.

### **BACKGROUND OF FACTS**

The Sheriff is the Kings County Coroner, but there is a Sergeant who is the Chief Deputy Coroner. The current Chief Deputy Coroner has thirty years with the Sheriff's department and the last five years as the Chief Deputy Coroner. The Kings Building, where the morgue is currently located, is in the process of being demolished. It is unknown where the Morgue will be relocated.

The Coroner is required by law to investigate all unexplained deaths in an attempt to determine the cause and manner of those deaths. Not all deaths require an autopsy, but certain circumstances do require an autopsy be conducted. The basic reason is to determine the medical cause of death. Another reason is to gather evidence for presentation in a court of law.

The Chief Deputy coroner provided the Grand Jury the following information:

- The current morgue has a capacity for 9 bodies
- Autopsies can take from one and one-half hours up to twelve hours

- Examinations of the bodies are conducted by an outside Pathologist at a cost of \$50 for a telephone consultation to \$1500 for a full autopsy, depending on the complexity of the case
- Approximately 425 bodies are brought to the morgue each year
- Three to four autopsies are performed each week
- Toxicology reports are generated by an outside firm
- The Coroner utilizes an outside firm for body removal

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Finding 1 It is unknown where the Morgue will be relocated when the Kings Building is demolished.

Recommendation 1 A relocation site for the Morgue should be determined.

## **COMMENTS**

The Coroner's working area is exceptionally clean and well maintained.

## **RESPONSE REQUIREMENT**

Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05 require that specific responses to both the findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Kings County.

Kings County Coroner's Department (90 days from the time of receipt of this report)