

# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**David J. Leffin**  
*County Coroner*

**Robert Kulhanek**  
*Chief Deputy Coroner*

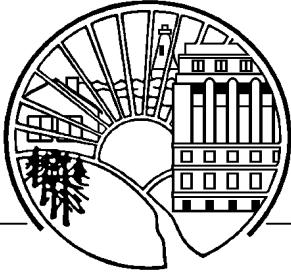
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To Adam Payne, Sheboygan County Administrator  
and the Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board of Supervisors

Please find enclosed the Sheboygan County Coroners report for the year 2009.

Respectfully submitted

David J. Leffin  
Sheboygan County Coroner



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## 2009 Annual Report – Coroner’s Office

It is the mission of the Sheboygan County Coroners Office to provide professional death investigation into the deaths reportable to the Sheboygan County Coroners Office as it is applicable to the Wisconsin State Statutes and make a determination into the cause and manner of death.

The coroner’s office investigates deaths in Sheboygan County that are reportable under Wisconsin Statutes 30.67, 346.71, 350, 155, 979.01 & 979.025. Some reasons for a coroner’s investigation would include all homicides, suicides, deaths following an accident or injury, deaths due to poisoning, deaths following abortion, deaths involving a motor vehicle, snowmobile, all terrain vehicle or boat; deaths with no physician in attendance in the past thirty days, deaths of a correctional inmate, deaths when after a reasonable time a physician cannot or will not sign the death certificate or in an emergency situation; deaths with unexplained, unusual or suspicious circumstances (including sudden unexplained death at any age), and deaths reportable under individual county Coroner/Medical Examiner policies.

The investigation process includes but is not limited to visual & physical examination of the deceased and the surroundings, the pronouncement or confirmation of the death of an individual, establishing the date and time of death, review of medication present and usage, review of medical history, identifying any recent changes in health or physical conditions, and obtaining information by speaking with family members, nursing staff and physicians, as well as neighbors, witnesses or law enforcement.

In deaths where law enforcement is involved, it is a collaborative effort of sharing investigation findings and knowledge. In some death investigations, more information is needed before a cause and manner of death can be made. An autopsy may be done and toxicology studies may be required to determine what kind and how much of certain medication is present in a persons system. X-rays may be taken to determine if there are broken bones or if any foreign objects are present and the location. There are other tests available for specific inquires.

The coroner’s office investigated 490 deaths in 2009—five more than the previous year (2008) and 60 fewer than in 2007. Part of the reason for the decline in death investigations over the past two years is the addition of the Sharon S. Richardson Hospice facility in Sheboygan Falls. Previous to the facility being built, many of the deaths occurred in the home and under state statute guidelines. The coroner’s office investigated and signed an additional 235 cremation permits, generating revenue of approximately \$32,625 on 424 cremation permits in 2009. This is a decrease of four cremations over 2008. The cremation fee was increased from \$25.00 to \$100.00 in October 2009.

Statistical information:

Manner of death - Number of cases – Percent

Pending	1	
Accidental	46	9%
Homicide	3	1%
Natural	418	85%
Suicides	14	3%
Undetermined	8	2%
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Male 227 Female 218	490	100%

The coroner's budget is a difficult one to plan or anticipate. The process of guessing or estimating how many deaths are going to occur in the county that fall under the coroner applicable state statutes is almost impossible. Trying to anticipate how many autopsies will be required is also impossible to say. The method of past practice has been to approximate based on numbers during a specific time frame during the previous year. This has worked reasonably well over the past twenty-three years. For the most part, the coroner's budget contains line items that there is no real control over.

Goals and objectives for 2010 would include: completing the renovation of the county morgue. The County morgue is in the process of being remodeled and will be going back to the original structural space it occupied when the courthouse was built. There will be office space for the coroner as well as the deputies, a separate door to the autopsy suite from the office area, a changing area/locker facility and rest room. A modern autopsy unit will be in the suite with a walk-in refrigeration unit and state-of-the-art ventilation. Opportunities to provide educational information to the community will be explored.

I look forward to continuing to serve Sheboygan County in the capacity and high standards that the current coroner's office has been known to provide for the past twenty-three years.

The cooperative efforts received from law enforcement and the funeral directors in Sheboygan County and the surrounding area make this job easier, and I thank them for that.

Respectfully submitted

David J. Leffin, Coroner, D-ABMDI  
Sheboygan County

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CORONER'S OFFICE**

