



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

David J. Leffin
County Coroner

Robert Kulhanek
Chief Deputy Coroner

CORONER'S 2010 Annual Report

MISSION STATEMENT AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the mission of the Sheboygan County Coroner's Office to provide professional death investigation into the deaths reportable to the Sheboygan County Coroner's Office as 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. Reasons for a coroner's investigation include 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 and 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 medications 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, 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 an individual's 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 inquiries. The coroner's office investigated 508 deaths in 2010, 18 more than in 2009, and signed 407 cremation permits.

Statistical information:

Manner of death - Number of cases – Percent

Pending	1	
Accidental	38	7%
Homicide	3	1%
Natural	450	89%
Suicides	13	3%
Undetermined	3	1%

508 100%

BUDGET

The coroners' budget is a difficult one to plan or anticipate. The process of estimating how many deaths will occur in the county that fall under the coroner applicable state statutes is difficult. Anticipating how many autopsies will be required is also difficult. 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-four years.

ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

In the Coroner's Office there is concern about maintaining qualified staff. I have been fortunate not to have a big turnover in staff. However, my staff is aging and there is no guarantee as to how long they will be willing to serve. I can only hope they stay with me to finish this term of office. I do not get any inquiries from individuals wanting to be deputy coroners. I do not plan to seek another term of office. The fact that I have not had any challengers for the office the past 24 years tells me one of two things either I am doing a good job or no one is interested in the position. If it is because no one is interested in the position, it may be time for Sheboygan County to look at how to make the office of coroner a job that a person would want. It may mean going to a salary for the elected official and benefits.

GOALS

Goals and objectives for 2011 include: Expanding community education, promoting and providing the opportunity for tissue donation and harvest, and continuing to operate under budget as we have done in the past.

I look forward to continuing to serve Sheboygan County in the capacity and high standards that the coroner's office has been known for over the past twenty-four 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

**SHEBOYGAN COUNTY
CORONER'S OFFICE**

