



GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

3121 Panthersville Road
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808

OPERATIONS BULLETIN

2020-01

MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

D. Victor Reynolds
Director

SUBJECT: Medical Examiner Operations during COVID-19

ATTENTION: Coroners, Funeral Directors, Law Enforcement, Death Investigation Specialists and Medical Examiners

DATE: 03/23/2020

CONTACT: Jonathan Eisenstat, MD
Chief Medical Examiner
404-270-8186

This operations bulletin is to advise all coroners, funeral directors, law enforcement, death investigation specialists and medical examiners of the following guidelines concerning GBI ME operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is for the safety of the Medical Examiner Staff as well as any individuals present in the morgue. This is subject to change as more is learned about the virus and its effects.

- 1 – Any decedent who has tested positive for COVID-19 prior to ME notification will not be accepted for examination, except if they fall within our standard guidelines (i.e. homicides, suicides with retained projectile, infants, etc.).
- 2 – Any decedent who has experienced the usual symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection and does not have another obvious cause of death, will be accepted for examination. The medical examiner will perform an external examination and a nasopharyngeal swab to be submitted to the GA DPH for testing. The decedent will be placed in the cooler until the results of the viral studies are received. If the decedent is positive for COVID-19, no further examination will be done. If the decedent is negative for COVID-19, further examination will be performed at the discretion of the medical examiner. Currently, results are known within 24-72 hours after submission of the swabs.
- 3 – No non-GBI Medical Examiner staff will be allowed in the morgue.
 - If attendance at the examination is deemed vital to an investigation, one visitor will be allowed at the viewing window.
 - Said individual will fill out a form indicating that they do not fall into the high risk category for COVID-19 infection (fever, chills, shortness of breath, exposure to a known COVID-19 positive individual, recent travel to a high risk area) and will be subject to their temperature being take with a non-touch thermometer.
 - There will be no personal protective equipment available for non-GBI staff.
- 4 – The GBI ME is not equipped to hold remains long term. The state is working on adding additional storage space but please work with your funeral homes and local hospitals (who may have MERC units [mortuary enhanced remains cooling units]) for storage of remains.

Division of Forensic Sciences
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808

Investigative Division
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808

Georgia Crime Information Center
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808