

for the Coroner. It can take many months for the report to be completed. The Coroner will review the report and decide if they can sign a Coroner's certificate of cause of death at this point. However, they may need to seek further information from healthcare professionals who treated the person who died, and may decide that an inquest is required. Once the post mortem report is finalised, the Coroner may release it, on request, to the family or other interested parties. You may find it helpful to look at this report with your General Practitioner.

### **What is an inquest?**

An inquest is an inquiry held in public by the Coroner. An inquest must be held when the death is due to unnatural causes, the decision to hold an inquest is at the discretion of the Coroner. The purpose of an inquest is to establish the circumstances and cause of death. Any witnesses such as a Garda, medical personnel or others who were present at the death may be asked to attend by the Coroner and give evidence.

### **How do I get a death certificate after a Coroner's post mortem examination?**

A death certificate can only be issued by the Registrar of Deaths when the Coroner has issued a Coroner's Certificate of cause of death. The Coroner will issue this certificate after the post mortem report is finalised, or after an inquest is held. The Death Certificate can then be obtained by contacting the Civil Registrations Service.

As it may take some time for the final death certificate to be issued, you may wish to apply for an interim death certificate. This is not a statutory document but it is helpful when dealing with social welfare, the post office and other financial institutions. An interim certificate can be obtained by contacting the Coroner's Office.

### **Is there any support available from Beaumont Hospital?**

If the Coroner orders a post mortem examination, Beaumont Hospital Liaison Social Worker will be in contact with you to provide some practical information and advice about bereavement support services.

We endeavour to provide a high standard of end of life care for our patients and their families. Please feel welcome to contact us if you need additional help or support.

### **Beaumont Hospital Contact Information**

Beaumont Hospital Mortuary	Tel: 01-8528180
Social Work Department	Tel: 01- 8093290
Chaplaincy Department	Tel: 01-8093229 chaplaincy@beaumont.ie
Patient Advisory Liaison Service	Tel: 01- 8093234 pals@beaumont.ie
Death Certificates Office	Tel: 01-8092182 deathcerts@beaumont.ie

### **Other Useful Contact Information**

Dublin District Coroner	Tel: 01-8746684 www.dublincoronerscourt.ie
Dublin District Mortuary	Tel: 01 8592840 <a href="mailto:DDM@justice.ie">DDM@justice.ie</a>
Civil Registrations Service 8 – 11 Lombard Street East, Dublin 2	Tel: 01- 8638200 <a href="mailto:certificates@hse.ie">certificates@hse.ie</a> <a href="http://www.civilregistrationservice.ie">www.civilregistrationservice.ie</a>
Irish Hospice Foundation Bereavement Support line	Tel: 1800 807077



**BEAUMONT HOSPITAL**

**Information Leaflet  
about  
Coroner's Post Mortem  
Examination**



## **Introduction**

The death of someone close is a sad and difficult time for family and friends. Staff at Beaumont Hospital sympathise with you on your bereavement. This information leaflet is intended to help you understand why some deaths must be reported to the Coroner, and address some of the questions you may have if the Coroner orders a post mortem examination.

## **What is the role of the Coroner?**

The Coroner is an independent official who is legally responsible for the investigation of certain deaths. They are legally obliged to enquire into the circumstances of sudden, unexplained, violent or unnatural deaths and to find out if the death is due to natural or unnatural causes. This may require a full post mortem examination and/or an inquest.

## **What Deaths are reported to the Coroner?**

Circumstances in which a death must be reported to the Coroner are listed in the Coroners Act 1962-2020. This includes but is not limited to a death that has occurred within 24 hours of admission to hospital or within 24 hours of an operation or anaesthetic, all deaths in the Emergency Department or Out Patients Department of a hospital or when the person is normally resident in a nursing home.

## **Who has the responsibility to report a death to the Coroner?**

Any person may notify the Coroner of the circumstances of a death e.g. doctors, healthcare professionals, funeral directors, or person in charge of the premises where the person died. In Beaumont Hospital, the deceased person's doctor is responsible for ensuring relevant deaths are reported to the Coroner. If a death is reported to the Coroner, it does not mean that a post mortem examination will always be required.

## **What happens after a death is reported to the Coroner?**

If a death is required to be reported to the Coroner, a member of hospital staff will discuss this with a nominated family member and will complete an information form with them. This form outlines the reason why the death was reported to the Coroner and that a post mortem examination may be ordered. It also covers some of the information provided in this leaflet. The family member will be provided with a copy of the information form and this leaflet.

The Coroner will make inquiries into the circumstances of the death. Sometimes a doctor may be in a position to certify the cause of death. If this is the case, and there are no other circumstances requiring investigation, the Coroner may permit the doctor to complete a medical certificate of cause of death (death notification form). This form will be sent to the family to allow them to register the death at their local HSE Civil Registrations Office. If the medical certificate of cause of death cannot be completed, the Coroner will likely order a post mortem examination to take place.

## **What is the role of An Garda Siochana when a death is reported to the Coroner?**

When a death is reported to the Coroner, the Gardai will usually attend the Hospital while relatives are present. The role of the Gardai is to collect information on behalf of the Coroner and does not mean that the death is regarded as suspicious. They are assisting the Coroner in establishing the identity of the person who has died, and where, how and when their death occurred. Identifying the body of a deceased person can be distressing for family and friends. If necessary, arrangements can be made for someone else to do this for you.

## **What happens if the Coroner orders a post mortem examination?**

It is at the Coroner's discretion to determine if a post mortem examination is required. If the Coroner orders a post mortem examination, you will not

be asked to provide consent. The Coroner's Office will make arrangements to transport the deceased from Beaumont Hospital Mortuary to Dublin District Mortuary, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9, where the examination will take place.

## **What is a Coroner's post mortem examination?**

A post mortem is a medical internal and external examination of the body of a person who has died, in order to establish the cause of death. It is performed by a specially trained doctor called a pathologist. Small tissue and blood samples are routinely retained for detailed examination.

In some cases it may be necessary to temporarily retain organs for detailed examination. In such cases, the nominated family member will be contacted by Dublin District Mortuary to advise if it was necessary to retain organs. They will also advise about the cremation and burial options available for retained organs, after they have been released by the Coroner.

It is not normally obvious that a post mortem examination has taken place and the body can be viewed afterwards. Great care is taken with the appearance of the deceased. However, be aware that the cause of death and the normal changes which occur after death may impact on the appearance of the body.

## **Will a post mortem delay funeral arrangements?**

The Coroner makes every effort to release the body of the deceased person for burial/ cremation without any undue delay. We advise you to contact your Funeral Director as soon as possible. The Funeral Director will guide you through the next steps and liaise with Dublin District Mortuary regarding the release of the deceased once the post mortem examination is completed.

## **What happens after a Coroner's post mortem examination?**

After the post mortem examination the pathologist who completed the examination will prepare a report