

**MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
PATROL DIVISION POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**CHAPTER 1 – CRIMINAL ENFORCEMENT  
PAT-01-08  
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**DATE: March 5, 2013**

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**DEATH INVESTIGATIONS**

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**POLICY**

It shall be the policy of this department to conduct competent and lawful investigations of all reports of deaths reported of the Marin County Sheriff-Coroner's Office.

**PROCEDURE**

To conduct competent and lawful death investigations, all deaths shall be treated as homicides and access to the scene shall be limited to personnel involved with the investigation until determined otherwise. Personnel conducting death investigations need to evaluate the circumstances of the death to make a preliminary determination as to whether the death is criminal, non-criminal, or suspicious in nature.

When investigating deaths suspected to be a result of criminal conduct or deaths that are suspicious in nature the patrol sergeant shall respond to the scene. Upon arrival at the scene, the patrol sergeant shall take control of the scene and direct the investigation until or unless relieved by the Investigations Unit or Watch Commander. Personnel from the Coroner Division shall not access the scene until authorized by the Investigations Unit, Watch Commander, or Patrol Sergeant.

Personnel investigating deaths suspected to be non-criminal in nature and falling under the jurisdiction of the Coroner (Government Code 27491) shall determine if the death occurred within unincorporated or incorporated area of the County of Marin to determine primary responsibility for general law enforcement investigation.

When investigating deaths within the unincorporated areas of the County of Marin, that are suspected to be non-criminal in nature, the Patrol Sergeant shall determine if their response to the scene is required based on the known circumstances of the death. All general law enforcement death investigations, occurring outside hospital facilities, shall be thoroughly documented with an incident report. At the conclusion of the general law enforcement investigation, a coroner death investigation will be conducted. The coroner death investigation shall be completed by personnel from the Coroner or Patrol Divisions based on the circumstances of the death. If the Sheriff-Coroner's Office claims jurisdiction for the human remains, then the coroner death investigation shall be thoroughly documented with an incident report.

Allied law enforcement agencies from incorporated areas of the County of Marin will request the Sheriff-Coroner's Office to conduct coroner death investigations after they have concluded their general law enforcement investigation. When evaluating the circumstances of the death, the investigation may be conducted by personnel assigned to either the Patrol Division or Coroner Division. The patrol sergeant is not required to respond to the scene of coroner death investigations being conducted by Patrol Division personnel in incorporated areas of the County of Marin. If the Sheriff-Coroner's Office assumes jurisdiction for human remains, then the coroner death investigation shall be thoroughly documented with an incident report. .

**RELATED STANDARDS**

Government Code Section 27491

**AFFECTED DIVISIONS:**

Investigations Division  
Patrol Division

**DATE OF REVISIONS:**

10/30/1994  
01/22/2002

**BY ORDER OF:**

**RICK NAVARRO, CAPTAIN  
BUREAU OF FIELD SERVICES**