



NC Medical Examiner System - **Understanding the Next Steps After Losing a Loved One**

This document is designed to provide guidance and answer questions for families navigating the loss of a loved one who is under the care and jurisdiction of the North Carolina Medical Examiner System. We hope this resource helps provide clarity and support during this difficult time.

Will My Loved One Have an Autopsy?

In most cases where foul play is suspected, an autopsy will be needed. Otherwise, the medical examiner's team will decide the best way to determine the cause of death. Many people do not need an autopsy. If you prefer, you can arrange for a private autopsy elsewhere. Not all cases require full toxicology tests. For specific questions, please contact your local medical examiner or autopsy center.



What Happens to Personal Belongings?

Any personal items your loved one has with them will be inventoried and given to the funeral home, unless law enforcement holds them as evidence.

What Should I Do Next?

You should start making arrangements with a funeral home or crematorium. Once you've chosen one, you can contact the regional autopsy center and give them the name of the facility. The center will help arrange transport for your loved one.

How Long Will My Loved One Be Kept?

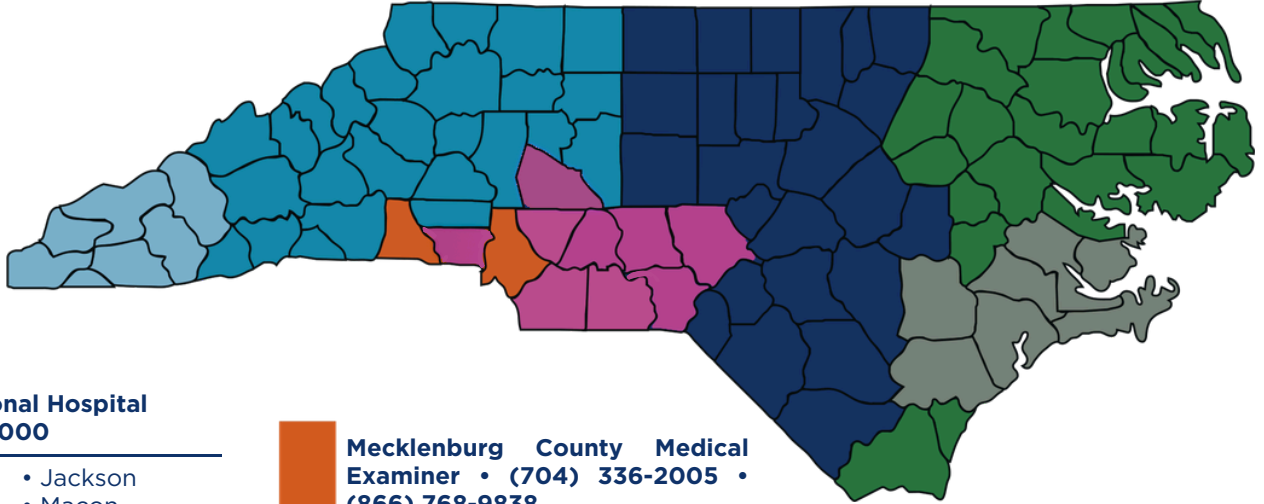
Most people are ready for release soon after the exam is finished. If no funeral home is chosen yet, they may be moved to a county facility. You have up to 10 days from the date of passing to make arrangements unless otherwise discussed with the medical examiner.

How Can I Get Documentation and Results?

You can request documents at www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov. You may check the status of the case by contacting your regional autopsy center (see page 2).

NC Medical Examiner System Autopsy Center Locations

Below is a list of autopsy centers where your loved one may be taken for examination. Please search based on the county where the person passed away.



Harris Regional Hospital
(828) 586-7000

- Cherokee
- Clay
- Graham
- Haywood
- Jackson
- Macon
- Swain

Mecklenburg County Medical Examiner • (704) 336-2005 • (866) 768-9838

- Cleveland
- Gaston
- Mecklenburg

ECU Brody School of Medicine • (252) 744-4655

Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center • (336) 716-2634

- Alexander
- Allegheny
- Ashe
- Avery
- Buncombe
- Burke
- Caldwell
- Catawba
- Davidson
- Davie
- Forsyth
- Henderson
- Iredell
- Lincoln
- Madison
- McDowell
- Mitchell
- Polk
- Rutherford
- Stokes
- Surry
- Transylvania
- Watauga
- Wilkes
- Yadkin
- Yancy

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner • (919) 743-9000

- Alamance
- Bladen
- Caswell
- Chatham
- Columbus
- Cumberland
- Durham
- Franklin
- Granville
- Guilford
- Harnett
- Hoke
- Johnston
- Lee
- Orange
- Person
- Randolph
- Robeson
- Rockingham
- Sampson
- Scotland
- Vance
- Wake
- Warren
- Wayne

- Beaufort
- Bertie
- Brunswick
- Camden
- Chowan
- Currituck
- Dare
- Edgecombe
- Gates
- Greene
- Halifax
- Hertford
- Hyde
- Lenoir
- Martin
- Nash
- New Hanover
- Northampton
- Pasquotank
- Pitt
- Perquimans
- Tyrell
- Washington
- Wilson

South Piedmont Autopsy Center • (704) 292-2668

- Anson
- Cabarrus
- Gaston
- Montgomery
- Moore
- Richmond
- Rowan
- Stanly
- Union

Onslow Memorial Hospital
(910) 577-2345

- Carteret
- Craven
- Duplin
- Jones
- Onslow
- Pender
- Pamlico