

AMERICAN BOARD OF MEDICOLEGAL
DEATH INVESTIGATORS

POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

April 2017



**American Board
of Medicolegal
Death Investigators, Inc.SM**

900 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21223
(410) 807-3007 Fax: (410) 807-3006

<http://abmdi.org>

info@abmdi.us

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	4
II.	Purpose of the Manual.....	4
III.	Objectives of the ABMDI.....	4
IV.	General Provisions	5
V.	Governing Body.....	5
VI.	Executive Committee.....	6
VII.	Staff.....	7
VIII.	Use of ABMDI Letterhead and Logo	7
IX.	Indemnification of Officers	7
X.	Committees and Councils.....	7
1)	General comments.....	7
2)	Advisory Council.....	8
3)	Nominating Committee	8
4)	Ethics Committee.....	9
5)	Newsletter Committee	11
6)	Bylaws Committee	12
7)	Policies and Procedures Committee.....	12
8)	Continuing Education Committee.....	12
9)	Presidential Advisory Committee	12
10)	Finance Committee.....	12
11)	Strategic Planning Committee	12
12)	Outreach and Retention Committee	13
XI.	Subcontracting.....	13
XII.	Professional Testing Agency	13
XIII.	Meetings.....	14
XIV.	Financial Management	15
XV.	Registry Certification.....	15
XVI.	Board Certification	17
XVII.	Examinations	18
1)	General.....	18
2)	Failing the Exam.....	19
XVIII.	Certification.....	19
XIX.	Maintenance Fees	20

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

XX.	Provisions for Examination	20
XXI.	Examination Grading	21
XXII.	Provisions for Re-Examination.....	21
XXIII.	Revisions to Examination.....	22
XXIV.	Recertification Requirements	23
XXV.	Examination Security	24
XXVI.	Code of Ethics and Conduct	24
XXVII.	Confidentiality	25
XXVIII.	Applicant and Certificant Rights	25
XXIX.	Grievance Procedures	26
XXX.	Disclosure of Information	26
XXXI.	Quality System	27
XXXII.	Records Management	27
XXXIII.	Document Retention Policy.....	28
1)	Purpose	28
2)	Policy.....	29
XXXIV.	ABMDI Fee Schedule	31
XXXV.	Test Development.....	32
XXXVI.	ORA Web Testing Guide	36
XXXVII.	ABMDI Proctor Responsibilities	38
XXXVIII.	Advisory Council Confidentiality Statement	39
XXXIX.	Suggested Reading List for Registry Exam.....	42
XL.	Skills Task List for Registry Examination	43
XLI.	Suggested Reading List for Board Certification Exam.....	48
XLII.	Advanced Skills Task for Board Certification Examination	50

I. Introduction

The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators was incorporated in 1998 as a national, not-for-profit, 501(c) (6), independent professional certification board to promote the highest standards of practice for medicolegal death investigators. The organization's headquarters are located in Baltimore, MD.

Medicolegal Death Investigator is defined as a professional having the legal authority to investigate deaths for a medicolegal (medical examiner/coroner) jurisdiction, who perform scene investigations, collect evidence and develop decedents' medical and social histories to assist the medical examiner/coroner in determining the cause and manner of death.

II. Purpose of the Manual

- 1) To set forth the policies and procedures by which the Directors and staff of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (hereinafter referred to as "ABMDI") conduct business and discharge their responsibilities, as set forth in the ABMDI Bylaws. These policies and procedures have evolved since the inception of the organization in 1998 and through the Board's decisions and interpretations of the Bylaws. The manual shall be subject to constant revision. Suggested changes to the manual should be forwarded to the Executive Director to disseminate to Board members for discussion and approval.

III. Objectives of the ABMDI

- 1) To enhance and maintain professional standards by evaluating knowledge, competency, and skills of medicolegal death investigators based on examination.
- 2) Administer objective and reliable examinations (basic and advanced) in the field of medicolegal death investigation.
- 3) Recognize qualified individuals who demonstrate mastery of basic and advanced skills and knowledge of medicolegal death investigation by granting certificates to those individuals who have met all application requirements and successfully completed rigorous examination.
 - a) Certification renewal occurs every five years to ensure the certificant is current in the field of medicolegal death investigation, maintains continuing education requirements and restates a commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics and Professional Standards.
 - b) Disclaimer: Certification attests to the fact that the certificant has knowledge required to pass the ABMDI examination. The ABMDI makes no representation as to the certificant's work product or his/her skills on the job.
- 4) Encourage medicolegal death investigators to adhere to high standards of professional practice and ethical conduct when performing medicolegal death investigations.
- 5) Raise the level of professional competency in medicolegal death investigation by identifying appropriate accredited training courses for professional development that are accepted for continuing education purposes toward recertification.
- 6) Maintain a publicly accessible listing of individuals holding current ABMDI certification.

IV. **General Provisions**

- 1) Prerequisites are published in brochure form and on the ABMDI web site. Informational letters are mailed upon request by interested parties.
- 2) An application process is used to determine applicant's eligibility. Only those individuals qualified should apply for ABMDI certification.
- 3) Participation in the certification program is voluntary.
- 4) Certificates shall be awarded only to applicants who meet or exceed the criteria as described for Registry or Board Certification. Grandfathering into the ABMDI is not permitted for any reason.
- 5) Ownership of the certificate remains with the ABMDI. The certificate must be surrendered if certification status is revoked.
- 6) The ABMDI does not discriminate based on race, religion, ethnic or national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability.
- 7) The ABMDI does not discriminate based on the applicant's membership with any professional association, affiliation with any type of medicolegal death investigation system, or require the applicant hold membership in any specific organization.
- 8) Every applicant and certificant shall refrain from exercising professional, personal or public conduct adverse to the ABMDI.
- 9) Such adverse conduct may result in denial of an application, censure of the certificant, suspension or revocation of an existing certification upon due process as defined in these policies.
- 10) The certification program may be amended periodically in order to maintain or update criteria and procedures. The changes will be dated and recorded at the ABMDI office and posted on the web site at the Board's discretion.
- 11) Fees and other costs associated with the certification are established by the Board and are subject to change.
- 12) "Days" as referred to in this document will refer to calendar days.
- 13) A transmission by electronic mail is deemed equivalent to written documentation and signature wherever called for within the Policy and Procedures manual.

V. **Governing Body**

- 1) A Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the "Board") consisting of a minimum of eleven (11) members governs the ABMDI. There shall be representation from both levels of certification (Registry and Board Certification), medical examiner and coroner systems with a balanced geographical representation as full voting certificants.
- 2) The Board cannot elect a majority of its successor's during any given year. All Board members shall have served for a minimum of one year on the Advisory Council. All Board members must be employed full time in a medicolegal system as a medicolegal death investigator or a supervisor of such investigations or a forensic pathologist.
- 3) Board members shall be elected, as defined in the Bylaws.
- 4) The Board has complete authority to make all decisions relating to the management and operation of the organization as well as awarding certification. These decisions

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

include, but are not limited to: approving applications for examination, verifying application information, administering the testing program, granting certification, renewing certification and investigating grievances.

- 5) A Board member has the duty to recuse him or herself from participation in any event when there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
- 6) The Board has the authority to pay legal obligations incurred by the organization, collect fees for services and to invest assets wisely.
- 7) No Board member shall receive financial compensation for duties performed on behalf of the ABMDI. However, a Board member may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of duties, provided the amount of such reimbursement is specified and approved in advance by the Board.
- 8) Only the President of the organization or his/her designee may make statements representing the official opinions of the ABMDI. Any unethical, unprofessional or otherwise inappropriate statements may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 9) A Board member may be removed for failure to attend the annual meeting for two (2) consecutive years (unless there are extenuating circumstances) or failing to actively participate or having engaged in matters of misconduct.
- 10) Duties of the Board
 - a) The Board shall exercise its legal and Bylaws authority and responsibility in the direction and conduct of the affairs of the ABMDI in order to promote and attain the objectives of the organization.
 - b) The Board shall supervise staff to ensure efficiency and quality of work.
 - c) The Board shall establish fees and assure appropriate procedures for payment of same.
 - d) The Board shall determine the date and place of the annual meeting.
 - e) Actions of the Board shall be adopted by a majority vote of the Board.
- 11) Officer Qualifications
 - a) Any Diplomate or Fellow in good standing shall be eligible to hold office after at least one year's participation on the Board and one year of certification.
 - b) Functional duties of the officers are described in the Bylaws.
 - c) Any officer may be removed during his/her term by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the existing Board.
 - d) The Executive Committee shall fill vacant officer positions. The successor(s) shall hold office for the un-expired term or until the next election. Refer to Bylaws.

VI. **Executive Committee**

- 1) The Board shall have an Executive Committee empowered to act on behalf of the Board on matters which require urgent action between meetings of the Board and to accomplish other specific designated tasks. Refer to Bylaws.

VII. **Staff**

- 1) The Executive Director will manage the daily affairs of the ABMDI at its headquarters located at the Forensic Medicine Center, Baltimore, MD.
- 2) The Executive Director shall be considered a full time employee.
- 3) The Executive Committee shall determine any bonus or additional compensation beyond salary for the staff positions. A monthly reimbursement will be submitted to University of Maryland for expense of salary and fringe benefits.
- 4) Staff will receive fringe benefits based on the University of Maryland employee policy.

VIII. **Use of ABMDI Letterhead and Logo**

- 1) The use of letterhead shall be used for conducting official ABMDI business and shall not be used for any other purposes. Certificants of the ABMDI cannot use the registered logo for self-publication purposes.

IX. **Indemnification of Officers**

- 1) The ABMDI shall obtain Errors and Omissions insurance indemnifying Board members and staff. Aggregate coverage will be for \$1 million annually.
- 2) Each former and present Board member and staff shall be indemnified by the ABMDI against expenses actually and necessarily incurred by or imposed upon him/her (including but not without being limited to, judgments, costs, and counsel fees) in connection with defense of the action, suit or proceeding in which s/he is made a party by reason of being or having been in such a position except in relation to matters as to which s/he shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his/her duties for the ABMDI. Such indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of other rights to which such officer may be entitled, under any bylaws, agreements or as a matter of law, or otherwise.

X. **Committees and Councils**

- 1) **General comments**
 - a) The President appoints committee members and committee chairs annually for permanent and ad hoc committees with the exception of the Nominating Committee.
 - b) Committee members shall be Diplomates or Fellows in good standing, or individuals with the necessary qualifications to fulfill specific committee requirements as deemed by the President.
 - c) Committee chair(s) arrange and preside over all committee activities to include correspondence, conference calls, email communications and meetings.
 - i) At all meetings of the committee, a majority of the members of the committee shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of the members of the committee present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the committee, unless the action is one upon which, by express provision of the statutes, the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws or resolution of the Board, a different vote is required, in which case such express provision shall govern and control.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- d) Committee Chairs will submit an annual report to the Executive Director at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting.
 - i) Committee members act under the direction of the chair.

2) **Advisory Council**

- a) Duties are described in the Bylaws.
- b) The President appoints Advisory Council members annually for a one-year term. Members shall be current ABMDI certificants in good standing. Members may be reappointed to serve successive terms. Membership should not exceed 25 certificants. All members of the Advisory Council shall be employees of their respective death investigation system at the time of their appointment to the Council or who have been previous members of the ABMDI Board, not to exceed two such previous Board members.
- c) Members of the Advisory Council shall have significant field investigation experience and represent the overall demographics of the applicant population served.
- d) Any certificant considered in good standing shall submit their CV and a letter of reference along with a letter of support from their direct supervisor to be considered for an Advisory Council position.
- e) A confirmation letter to the Advisory Council member will be mailed upon appointment. A letter may be sent to their supervisor if requested by the Advisory Council member.
- f) Members of the Advisory Council shall attend a minimum of one meeting a year. Failure to attend two consecutive meetings may result in removal from the Advisory Council by the President.
- g) Violations of the ABMDI Code of Ethics and Conduct are cause for termination from the Advisory Council. The member shall be notified in writing of such termination.
- h) Notification will be given to those members whose term of service is complete.

3) **Nominating Committee**

- a) The Committee shall be constituted according to the Bylaws.
- b) Rotating Board terms of three years will be maintained to keep continuity to the Board and prevent nominating a majority of successors at any one election.
- c) The committee shall identify potential candidates and review their qualifications after securing their willingness to serve.
- d) The committee shall then make written recommendations for Board and officer positions at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting.
- e) The chair shall forward the committee report to the Executive Director who will present the slate at the annual meeting for vote if the committee chair is not present at the meeting.
- f) Nominations from the floor may be made during the annual meeting, at which time elections are held. Current Board members or officers are not allowed to nominate from the floor for more than 50% of the candidates.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- g) The election of officers and Directors shall be conducted at the annual meeting.
 - h) Votes are cast by secret ballot following the guidelines in *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* 4th Edition by Alice Sturgis.
 - i) Board members shall have an equal vote.
 - j) The Executive Director shall tally ballots and officially announce elected positions during the Board meeting. Those elected shall be determined by a majority vote. Ties will be broken by a second vote using a simple majority.
 - k) Officers and Board members shall take office immediately following the close of the meeting at which they are elected and shall hold office for such term not to exceed three years as described by the Bylaws. Individuals may be reelected to successive terms, not to exceed nine consecutive years for Directors and six consecutive years for officers.
- 4) **Ethics Committee**
- a) There shall be a standing Ethics Committee, whose primary function will be:
 - i) To order or conduct investigations into alleged violations of the ABMDI Code of Ethics and Conduct as defined in the Bylaws of the Organization and, as necessary, to serve as a hearing body concerning conduct of individual certificants which may constitute a violation.
 - ii) To act as an advisory body, rendering opinions on the ramifications of contemplated actions by individual certificants.
 - iii) Decisions of the Committee and/or the Board of Directors shall be based on a preponderance of evidence.
 - b) Process
 - i) All complaints must be received in written format at the ABMDI office and must be signed by the accuser to open an investigation.
 - ii) Written complaints or allegations against an applicant or certificant to the ABMDI office shall promptly be transmitted to the Chair of the Ethics Committee by the Executive Director.
 - iii) The Ethics Committee shall determine whether the alleged complaint(s) or allegation(s) fall within its jurisdiction and whether there is probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be well founded.
 - iv) If the Ethics Committee, in its preliminary determination, finds that it does not have jurisdiction or that there is a lack of probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be well founded, it shall close the case and the name of the accuser. The accusation and the results of the investigation shall remain confidential.
 - v) If the Ethics Committee finds that it has jurisdiction, prompt notice of the filing of the complaint or allegation(s) (within 30 days of determination of jurisdiction), omitting the name of the complainant(s), shall be given to the accused. The Committee shall assemble written information from both the accused and the complainant(s) and any other pertinent sources, which shall permit the Committee to determine whether the allegation requires further action.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- vi) The Committee may appoint an individual to investigate the allegation and/or to present the evidence to the Committee.
- vii) If, based on the results of an investigation, the Committee decides to dismiss the allegation(s) without formal hearing, it may do so. The Committee shall issue a report to the Board of Directors, setting forth the basic facts but omitting the names of the parties, and stating the reason(s) for its decision to dismiss. The Committee will then close the case and the name of the accuser, the accusation and the results of the investigation shall remain confidential.
- viii) If the Committee decides to formally hear the case, it shall give the accused a reasonable opportunity to be heard. The complainant(s) shall also be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard.
- ix) If the Committee's decision is that unethical conduct occurred on the part of the accused, the Committee shall issue a report to the Board of Directors including a recommendation for censure, suspension or revocation of the certificate.
- x) The Board will then review the report and any written submission provided by the certificant. They will then ratify, overturn or modify the decision or remand the case to the Ethics Committee for further action. The decision shall require a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members of the Board. The party accused of unethical conduct will then be notified of the action by registered return receipt mail. The nature and conditions of any sanction shall be provided to the certificant in writing. The names of the complainant(s) shall be kept confidential.
- xi) The degree of sanction imposed upon the accused may take into consideration, but are not limited to, the following discretionary criteria:
 - (1) Seriousness of the offense.
 - (2) Whether the offense directly relates to the duties of the death investigator.
 - (3) The time since the offense occurred.
 - (4) Whether the offense involved interpersonal violence.
 - (5) Whether the offense involved a minor or person of diminished capacity.
 - (6) Whether the certificant's actions and conduct before and after the offense occurred are consistent with the ability to hold a position of public trust.
- xii) The accused has the right to appeal the action of the Committee to the Board of Directors. The request for appeal shall be submitted to the Executive Director in writing within thirty (30) days of notification as evidenced by the return receipt. The Executive Director shall immediately advise all members of the Board of Directors of the appeal. The Executive Director will supply copies of the entire case file, including the names of all parties in the matter, to the accused upon request and the confidentiality of the matter is waived.
- xiii) If an appeal is requested, the complainant(s) will be immediately notified.
- xiv) The accused shall file any written statements s/he may wish to submit on his/her behalf with the Executive Director within thirty (30) days of notice of

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

appeal. Upon request to the Executive Director, an additional thirty (30) days shall be granted to either party.

- xv) The Board of Directors shall consider all information submitted by the appellant, including any additional information provided by either party. The Board of Directors shall then prepare a written statement of the reason for its actions and file the same with the Executive Director not more than sixty (60) days following receipt of the appeal.
 - xvi) If upon appeal, the revocation has been overturned, the certification shall be reinstated. If reinstated, the required maintenance fee payment shall be the annual maintenance fee for the year that revocation is lifted.
 - xvii) No member of the Board of Directors, officers or Executive Director who is the subject of an Ethics Committee investigation, or who has any other conflict of interest, shall participate in any manner before the Board concerning ethics.
- c) Confidentiality
- i) After a complaint is resolved, the matter shall be treated as confidential and all correspondence between members of the committee and the parties of the complaint shall refer to the case by file number only.
 - ii) Other than the reports to the Board, the members of the Ethics Committee, staff or any appointed investigator(s) shall scrupulously avoid any disclosure of the investigation and accord the respondent the fullest opportunity for access to information, opportunity to respond to the charges, to present evidence, and to be represented by counsel.
 - iii) The Ethics Committee has the authority to communicate by written correspondence, telephone, fax and e-mail, providing that communications are confidential.
- d) Case Files
- i) Files of the Ethics Committee on open cases shall be securely maintained by the Chair who shall transfer them to the new Chair upon leaving office. Case files on closed cases shall be sealed by the chair and transferred to the ABMDI office where they shall be stored in a secure space designated for this purpose. Access to these files shall be available only to the Executive Director or Chair of the Ethics Committee. Other members of the Ethics Committee and Board of Directors shall destroy their files when a case is closed. The Chair of the Ethics Committee may maintain a summary of past cases with identifying information redacted.

5) [Newsletter Committee](#)

- a) The ABMDI News is the official newsletter of the ABMDI. It is published quarterly in electronic format via the list serve to Diplomates and Fellows considered to be in good standing.
- b) The President shall appoint the Editor and a minimum of three additional committee members to ensure a quality, timely publication. The Executive Director is an ex-officio member.
- c) Previous newsletters are archived at the ABMDI office, on the ABMDI website and available upon request.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

6) **Bylaws Committee**

- a) This committee shall review and make recommendations concerning changes to the Bylaws and draft proposed language for such changes for presentation to the Board of Directors.

7) **Policies and Procedures Committee**

- a) A minimum of one member of the Board shall be appointed to the committee, with appointment lengths staggered to provide continuity.
- b) The purpose of the committee is to update this Policy and Procedure Manual following the annual ABMDI Board meeting. Revisions to the manual shall be made as needed to maintain a quality certification program. Revisions will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.
- c) Each Board member shall be provided a current version of the Policy and Procedure Manual.
- d) The Executive Director is appointed as a standing member of the committee and archives all copies of the manual for historical purposes.

8) **Continuing Education Committee**

- a) The Continuing Education Committee shall consist of at least the chairperson who is a Board member and one Advisory Council member. The President may appoint additional members as needed.
- b) All requests for course accreditation will be reviewed by the Executive Director in accordance with the stated accreditation policy. The Executive Director will forward any questionable requests to the Continuing Education Committee for further review for approval or denial.
- c) ABMDI staff shall review all Diplomate and Fellow recertification requests and approve or deny in accordance with recertification policy. They will contact the Continuing Education Committee should there be questionable documentation or further clarification needed.

9) **Presidential Advisory Committee**

- a) The founding members and past presidents of the ABMDI shall remain advisors to the Board of Directors for historical perspective and to provide assistance at the discretion of the President.

10) **Finance Committee**

- a) This committee shall review the budget and make recommendations regarding fiscal policy of the ABMDI.
- b) The committee shall be composed of a minimum of the Treasurer.
- c) The Executive Director shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.

11) **Strategic Planning Committee**

- a) The committee shall be responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding short term, intermediate and long term plans and changes to the organization required to better fulfill its purpose.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- b) The committee shall be composed at a minimum of the Vice President, at least one Board of Director and one Advisory Council member. The Executive Director is a standing ex-officio member.

12) **Outreach and Retention Committee**

- a) The committee shall be responsible for provide guidance and support to applicants and certificants; and identify recertification and retention matters pertaining to certificants.

XI. Subcontracting

- 1) The Board may subcontract with individuals or companies to assist in the operation(s) of the organization when deemed necessary.
- 2) Any agency or individual shall be reputable in the field of medicolegal death investigation and have no vested interest concerning the assignment.
- 3) Fees paid for service must be appropriate for the service(s) rendered.

XII. Professional Testing Agency

- 1) An independent, professional Educational Consultant who specializes in professional testing shall be subcontracted to provide testing expertise, develop cut scores, maintain the database of test questions and statistics, maintain records necessary for validation and reliability, conduct test revision and cut score workshops, grade examinations and report results to the ABMDI office.
- 2) The Educational Consultant shall record all information required to maintain statistical data necessary to support the reliability and validity of examinations.
- 3) Exams and examination scores shall be maintained by the professional testing agency for sufficient time to allow for an appeal process.
- 4) The Educational Consultant shall report to the Board.
- 5) The Educational Consultant shall have no vested interest in the operation of the Board and does not have voting rights.
- 6) The Educational Consultant presides over the Advisory Council meeting and shall guide the Advisory Council in developing and reviewing examinations by:
 - a) Occupational Analysis (defining the scope of assessment)
 - b) Task Analysis
 - c) Curriculum validation
 - d) Test item writing and assignment to content areas
 - e) Item validation (rating)
 - f) Pilot testing to medicolegal death investigators and non-investigators
 - g) Cut score setting

The Educational Consultant shall upgrade the test bank as required by standards within the testing industry.

The Educational Consultant shall maintain statistics on measures of validity and estimates of test reliability.

XIII. Meetings

- 1) *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* by Alice Sturgis, current edition, serves as the basis upon which the meetings are conducted and ultimately govern the procedures of all Board meetings.
- 2) The annual meeting of the Board shall be held at such time and place as determined by the President.
- 3) Additional meetings of the Board may be called in accordance with the Bylaws of the organization.
- 4) Conference calls or email communication may be used in place of face-to-face meetings in order to facilitate business in a timely manner.
- 5) When ballots are necessitated by urgent business needs, the receipt of mailed or emailed votes by 100 percent of the total number of Board members, unless a Board member is not available for an extended period, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by mail.
- 6) All meetings of the Board shall be fully recorded. Minutes shall be archived at the office.
- 7) Quorum and Voting
 - a) Officer and Board elections shall be held in conjunction with the annual meeting.
 - b) A quorum shall consist of half plus one (1) of the total Board. Each officer and Board member shall be entitled to one (1) vote.
 - c) To approve amendments to the Bylaws, a three-fourths (3/4) vote shall be obtained.
 - d) For other motions at the Board meetings, a majority in favor of the motion shall be obtained.
 - e) Proxy voting is not permitted.
- 8) Open Meetings
 - a) The annual meeting shall be open except on those matters ruled “in executive session” by the President.
 - i) All matters discussed in executive session should remain confidential and may only be discussed outside of the executive session with legal counsel, persons present during the executive session, or with absent board members if such a need is required, unless otherwise determined by the President.
 - ii) Matters of a sensitive nature (i.e. personnel issues, pending or threatened litigation, etc.) should be considered confidential and discussed only with legal counsel and other individuals whose need for information is required to further the best interests of the ABMDI.
- 9) Minutes
 - a) The Executive Director shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of Board Minutes with approval by the Secretary.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- b) After approval, the minutes from Board meetings shall be distributed to the Board within forty-five days (45) after the meeting. Notes from teleconference calls shall be distributed as soon as possible to the Board.
- c) Minutes of the Executive Committee shall be distributed only to Executive Committee members. A summary will be prepared by the Executive Director for distribution to the Board of Directors.
- d) Non-substantive editorial changes (i.e. grammar, spelling, typographical errors, punctuation, etc.) in the minutes can be performed by the Executive Director without approval from the Board.

10) Meeting Expenses

- a) Board members are responsible for funding their own travel and meeting expenses.

XIV. Financial Management

1) Budget Preparation

- a) The fiscal year will be recognized from July 1 – June 30. The annual budget shall be calculated on the basis of the fiscal year. The Executive Director and the Treasurer shall prepare the budget.
- b) The proposed budget shall be distributed for review and comment to the Board at the annual meeting.
- c) The Board shall approve the budget at its annual meeting.

2) Internal Audit Controls

- a) The Executive Director will balance the finances monthly and forward a quarterly report to the Treasurer and President, who shall continuously evaluate the financial health of the organization.

3) Bank Accounts

- a) The Executive Director is authorized to sign checks on behalf of the ABMDI following approval by the Treasurer.

4) External Audits

- a) The Board shall require a certified audit by a licensed public accountant when deemed necessary, but not greater than every seven years. A compilation may suffice. Federal law does not require an annual audit for non-profit organizations.
- b) A professional accounting firm will complete and file the annual federal tax report in accordance with state statutes.

XV. Registry Certification

- 1) The Registry certification is the initial certification that provides official recognition that an individual has acquired specialized knowledge and demonstrated proficiency in the standards of practice necessary to properly conduct a competent, thorough medicolegal death investigation.
- 2) Application Criteria:

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- a) Individuals who are interested in becoming professional medicolegal death investigators certified by the ABMDI are expected to be knowledgeable of the National Institutes of Justice 2010 publication *Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator* (and any subsequent revisions), other applicable medicolegal death investigation practice standards and techniques, and the ABMDI Code of Ethics and Conduct.
- b) Individuals shall currently be employed by a medical examiner/coroner jurisdiction or equivalent federal authority with the responsibility to “conduct death scene investigations” or supervise such investigations.
- c) Individuals shall have a minimum of 640 hours of experience as a Medicolegal Death Investigator. Information on how to calculate this data is posted on the ABMDI website.

3) Application Requirements

- a) Applications may be mailed or electronically sent from the office upon receipt of an application request. Application requests can be found on the ABMDI web site or at organization headquarters.
- b) The application fee must accompany the request.
- c) Application materials must be completed in their entirety and returned to the ABMDI office at least 30 days prior to an examination date for processing.
- d) A Suggested Reading and Task List shall be included in the application packet as study references.
- e) Staff shall process the following items for accuracy and completion:
 - i) Application Form
 - ii) Notarized Employment Verification Form
 - iii) Professional Reference Form or letter of professional reference
 - iv) Signed Code of Ethics and Conduct
 - v) Notarized Performance Training Guidebook Sign-off Form
 - vi) Notarized official Performance Training Checklist
 - (1) The applicant shall have knowledge of each of the 306 skills which must be correctly performed or otherwise validated in the presence of the trainer/skilled practitioner.
 - (2) Each of the 52 tasks on the Verification Sign-off Sheet must contain initials from the competent practitioner indicating the applicant has knowledge of the tasks and is able to properly and independently perform them.
 - (3) Staff shall contact the competent practitioner and verify that the applicant has properly and independently performed each task.

4) Scope of Knowledge

- a) The scope of knowledge for the Registry exam is defined in the National Institutes of Justice 2010 publication *Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator* (and subsequent revisions) and is further defined in the current Performance Training Checklist.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- b) The Board acknowledges that applicants may not be required to perform certain tasks covered on the examination in their daily operations but that the exam is national in scope; therefore, all applicants shall possess the defined scope of knowledge in order to pass the exam.
 - c) Applicants can view example questions on the professional testing agency's web site, which is linked from the ABMDI web site.
- 5) Upon successful completion of the Registry examination, the applicant will become a Diplomate of the ABMDI and be eligible to use designation (D-ABMDI) in describing their certifications. Registry numbers are assigned to certificants at that time.

XVI. Board Certification

- 1) The advanced Board Certification examination is available to experienced Registered medicolegal death investigators who prove their mastery of all aspects of medicolegal death investigation.
- 2) Application Criteria
 - a) The applicant shall provide documentation of a minimum of an Associate Degree in a related professional field from an accredited post-secondary institution.
 - b) The applicant shall be a Diplomate in good standing for at least six months.
 - c) The applicant shall have 4,000 hours of death investigation experience during the past six years.
 - d) The applicant shall currently be employed in a medical examiner/coroner jurisdiction or equivalent federal authority and have the responsibility to "conduct death scene investigations" or supervise such investigations.
- 3) Application Requirements
 - a) Applications may be mailed or electronically sent upon written request from the office when a completed application request is submitted. Application requests can be found on the ABMDI web site or at organizational headquarters.
 - b) An application fee must accompany the request.
 - c) Application materials must be completed in their entirety and returned to the ABMDI office at least 30 days prior to an examination date for processing.
 - d) A Suggested Reading List and Advanced Skills Task List is included in the application packet as study references.
 - e) The ABMDI staff shall process the following items for accuracy and completion:
 - i) Application Form
 - ii) Documentation of at least an Associate Degree
 - iii) Notarized Employment Verification Form
 - iv) Forensic Science Specialist Reference Form
 - v) Administrator/Supervisor Reference Form
 - vi) Law Enforcement Reference Form

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- f) Staff may telephone the person signing the Notarized Work Verification Form to verify the 4,000 hours of employment.
- 4) Scope of Knowledge
 - a) The scope of knowledge for the Board Certified exam is defined minimally in the National Institutes of Justice 2010 publication *Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator* (and subsequent revisions) and will rely heavily on the applicant's cumulative experience and further training in medicolegal death investigation, which might include independent study and attendance at workshops, seminars, and other training venues. As a minimum, and given that the examination is broad based and encompasses the forensic sciences generally, the applicant is required to have at least an Associate Degree in a related field.
 - b) The Board acknowledges that applicants may not be required to perform certain tasks covered on the examination in their daily operations but that the exam is national in scope; therefore, all applicants shall possess the defined scope of knowledge, time in service, degree in related field, and specific forensic references in order to pass the exam.
- 5) Upon successful completion of Board Certification examination, the certificant will achieve Fellow status with the ABMDI and be eligible to use designation (F-ABMDI) in describing their certifications.

XVII. Examinations

- 1) General
 - a) ABMDI examinations are constructed to parallel field-based national standards. The Registry and Board Certification exams are crafted and kept up-to-date by the Advisory Council, made up of a panel of experts from both public and private sector agencies (coroner and medical examiner). Advisory Council members are selected based on their expertise and experience in the occupational field and knowledge of national standards.
 - b) The test development process used is a modified version of the DACUM (Developing A CURRICULUM) process, which defines the critical core competencies necessary to achieve professional competency. Each examination question is carefully constructed to assess these critical core competencies.
 - c) Examinations must be scheduled within eighteen (18) months of receipt of application packet. If the certification exam is not scheduled, with the exception of extenuating circumstances, all fees are forfeited and the application is considered defaulted. The applicant shall reapply and pay current fees in order to start the process again.
 - d) Examinations are proctored at approved testing centers or local colleges and universities through their testing and assessment departments.
 - e) The ABMDI does not discriminate against persons with disabilities and will make reasonable accommodations for testing in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as long as the ABMDI receives notice at the time the exam is scheduled.
 - f) Examinations are computer based unless the candidate specifically requests a paper/pencil version, for which there is an additional fee.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- g) Written (multiple choice) portions of the examination are composed of validated questions within specific discipline areas. There are a specific number of questions per curriculum area. Test questions are drawn from a databank of validated questions and rotated to ensure test integrity.
 - h) Based on standard testing calculations, applicants are allowed four hours to complete the written (multiple-choice) section.
 - i) For the Board Certification examination, knowledge of scene investigation shall be demonstrated through a written performance evaluation.
 - i) Applicants will be asked to provide information regarding identification and collection of evidence, interviewing techniques and written skills using medicolegal language.
 - ii) The applicants will be given 30 minutes to evaluate each of three (3) different death investigation scenarios.
 - j) Examinations/retests shall be graded by a professional testing agency retained by the Board.
 - k) A passing score for each section of the examination is predetermined using standard cutting score methods. The applicant shall successfully pass each section of the exam.
 - l) The testing agency will provide pass/fail scores for initial testing to the applicant directly as well as to the ABMDI office.
 - m) A pass/fail score will be released and recorded by the ABMDI. The testing agency will not report numerical scores.
 - n) The ABMDI shall officially notify the applicant of the examination results.
 - o) If the examination is successfully passed, a certificate, wallet card and continuing education folder will be mailed to the Diplomate or Fellow.
- 2) **Failing the Examination**
- a) The applicant shall contact the ABMDI office in order to schedule a retest. All paperwork must be completed and fees paid in full prior to the retest being scheduled.
 - b) At least sixty (60) days should exist between testing dates.
 - c) Retests may be administered in a variety of formats (i.e. multiple choice, fill in the blank, etc.) The applicant will be required only to retest for the section(s) of the examination which were failed.
 - d) Retesting is administered online unless paper/pencil format is requested.

XVIII. Certification

- 1) The ABMDI shall have the authority to issue certificates to persons who have complied with all application requirements and passed certification examination(s).
- 2) Certificates shall be valid for a period of five years from the date the examination is deemed as a passing grade.
- 3) Certificates shall be numbered, bear the certificants name, status of certification, date of issue and the expiration date.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- 4) Certificates remain the property of the ABMDI, but persons to whom a certificate is issued shall be entitled to its continued possession unless and until such certificate is revoked.
- 5) Certificates may be denied or revoked for the following reasons:
 - a) Violation of the ABMDI Code of Ethics and Conduct.
 - i) Policies regarding ethical violations are found elsewhere in this document.
 - b) Conviction of a certificant in a court of a felony.
 - c) Determination that the certificant was not in fact eligible to receive such certificate at the time of its issuance.

XIX. Maintenance Fees

- 1) The Board shall determine the annual maintenance fee.
- 2) Notice to certificants shall be sent by electronic mail no later than November 1 of the calendar year. The annual maintenance fee is due by March 31 of the following calendar year.
- 3) If payment is not received by March 31 of the following calendar year, the certificant will no longer be considered in good standing and their status will be listed as inactive on the web site, the certificant file becomes inactive and the certificant loses certification benefits to include: email listserv access and receipt of newsletter.
- 4) Should the certificant choose to reactivate his/her file before certification expires, they will be assessed all unpaid maintenance fees along with a late fee for each year. All debts must be paid in full before reactivation.

XX. Provisions for Examination

- 1) Expenses associated with proctoring of examinations/retests shall be the responsibility of the applicant and should be paid in full prior to taking the examination/retest.
- 2) If examination fees are not paid, official notification of examination results and a certificate will not be issued, and the name of the applicant will not appear on the ABMDI web site.
- 3) Upon completion of the application packet, written notification shall be mailed to the applicant informing them that they are eligible to sit for the certification examination.
- 4) The applicant shall return the Exam Request Form indicating the location and date they would like to sit for the exam to the ABMDI office at least 21 days prior to the examination date.
- 5) If the Exam Request Form is received after the 21-day deadline, an additional fee shall be assessed.
- 6) Examinations shall be offered at approved testing centers or local colleges/universities as verified by ABMDI staff.
 - a) Proctors at colleges or universities shall complete a Proctor Verification Form and Online Testing Procedures sent by the professional testing agency before the username/password can be delivered.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- b) The testing location should be quiet and devoid of distracting movement. The room should have ample lighting, comfortable seating, and adequate workspace for each participant.
 - c) The ABMDI does not discriminate against persons with disabilities and will make reasonable accommodations for testing in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as long as the ABMDI receives notice at the time the exam is scheduled.
 - d) If more than one applicant is testing at the same time, participants shall be seated with at least one empty chair between them.
 - e) If needed, testing materials shall be returned by verifiable means to the professional testing agency by the proctor.
- 7) An applicant who is scheduled to test, but is prevented by circumstances from doing so, must notify the ABMDI office of such cancellation immediately.
 - 8) In the case of a cancellation, the testing fee may be applied to a future test date. The candidate is responsible for fees established at the time of application.
 - 9) If the applicant fails to notify the ABMDI office of cancellation, 20% of the testing fee shall be assessed to cover the cost of rescheduling. If there are no extenuating circumstances, a 100% fee may be charged.

XXI. Examination Grading

- 1) The professional testing agency retained by the Board shall grade the examinations/retests.
- 2) A passing score for each section is predetermined using standard cutting score methods. The applicant shall successfully pass each curriculum section of the examination.
- 3) The professional testing agency shall provide pass/fail scores of initial testing to the applicant directly as well as to the ABMDI office.
- 4) A pass/fail score shall be released. Numerical scores are not recorded in the applicant's file.
- 5) The ABMDI shall officially notify the applicant of examination results.
- 6) A certificate, wallet card and continuing education folder shall be mailed to the certificant along with instructions for acquiring 45-hours of continuing education within the next five-year period.

XXII. Provisions for Re-Examination

- 1) The applicant may retest the section(s) failed on the original examination. Application shall be made to the ABMDI office.
- 2) At least sixty (60) days shall exist between testing and retesting. A separate fee will be required for each section retested.
- 3) Retesting is accomplished by offering equivalent forms of the examination questions which measure the same knowledge and skill area and are weighted the same difficulty rating as predetermined by the professional testing agency.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- 4) Retests may be proctored at an ABMDI pre-approved testing facility, local community college or university. Retests are offered via computer unless paper/pencil form is specifically requested.
- 5) Staff shall contact the college/university to confirm proctor eligibility, exam date and time, and to explain testing procedures.
- 6) Staff shall email or fax the professional test agency the retest request, to include applicant name, date, time, type and number of retest and proctor information (name, mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and email address).
- 7) Confirmation of the retest shall be emailed to the applicant, unless the applicant specifies notice by US Postal mail.
- 8) The proctor shall return any testing materials by verifiable means to the professional testing agency.
- 9) The testing agency shall notify the candidate and the ABMDI office of the results.
- 10) If the applicant fails the retest, a second retest may be administered sixty days after the original retest date. The procedures above are again applicable.
- 11) The applicant has three attempts to successfully pass the certification exam in its entirety. Following the third failure, a remediation process must be completed. This process shall consist of the following:
 - a) The applicant shall restart the application process in its entirety and accumulate an additional 640 hours of experience as a medicolegal death investigator before submitting a new application for certification.
 - b) The applicant shall utilize a different competent practitioner(s) to sign off on the task list and pay all associated fees as with an original application.
- 12) If a remediation applicant fails to pass the examination after an additional three attempts, they shall be prohibited from applying for certification in the future.

XXIII. Revisions to Examination

- 1) The Advisory Council and Board members shall meet at least once a year to review the test bank and evaluate it for current knowledge and technologies to ensure that the examination remains reliable and valid to the profession.
- 2) Questions are reviewed after one hundred (100) administrations or one year of offering.
- 3) The Educational Consultant shall consider test revision every three years after statistical review. Revision is mandatory every five years.
- 4) The Educational Consultant, as an indicator of individual test item performance, shall also review item analysis. Poorly performing items are marked for review by the Advisory Council.
- 5) Test revision shall consist of revising, rewriting, eliminating or adding new questions as deemed necessary under the supervision of the Educational Consultant. Such revision shall meet the requirements set forth in the initial test development.
- 6) The performance sections shall be revised and updated as deemed necessary, using the guidelines previously established.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- 7) The ABMDI Board shall approve all revisions to the testing program.

XXIV. Recertification Requirements

- 1) Recertification is mandatory every five-year period.
- 2) Forty-five (45) hours of approved ABMDI continuing education is required for the five-year period.
 - a) Approved ABMDI continuing education includes but is not limited to courses accredited by: American Medical Association, American Nursing Association, American Academy of Physician Assistants, American Society for Clinical Pathology, American Bar Association, College of American Pathologists, Emergency Medical Services, Federal Emergency Management Agency, International Association of Forensic Nurses, Peace Officer Standards and Training (or equivalent), Pennsylvania Coroner's Education Board, or a post-secondary institution recognized by a national educational accrediting agency. Current approved training shall be maintained by the ABMDI office and shall be published on the web site.
 - b) All courses must be relevant to the field of medicolegal death investigation.
- 3) All requirements shall be completed and received in the ABMDI office along with the required fees prior to the date of certification expiration.
- 4) Certificants are responsible for documenting forty-five hours (45) of ABMDI approved continuing education in the continuing education folder provided upon passing the certification examination or on the ABMDI website in their online account. Documentation must show proof of attendance, number of hours per offering, dates of attendance and approving agency.
- 5) ABMDI will prepare an ongoing list each year indicating the Diplomates and Fellows who will be required to submit audits during the upcoming year.
- 6) The ABMDI office shall mail a letter six months prior to certification expiration advising the certificant to send in proof of 45-hours of ABMDI approved continuing education along with other requirements.
- 7) Packets received in the ABMDI office shall be opened to verify timely receipt and completion. The date of receipt shall be documented in the database.
- 8) A signed Code of Ethics and Conduct, Notarized Employment Verification Form and Professional Standards statement must accompany the continuing education packet received by ABMDI before recertification is granted. In lieu of the Employment Verification Form, proof of continued competency may suffice. Continued competency includes maintenance of continuing education requirements, maintenance of good standing with the ABMDI and:
 - a) Current employment as a medicolegal death investigator in a Medical Examiner/Coroner office or equivalent federal authority with the responsibility to "conduct death scene investigations" and payment of a \$25 fee, or
 - b) If not currently employed as above, successful passing of a recertification exam with payment of a \$110 recertification examination fee.
 - i) Retesting fees for the recertification examination will be \$20 per section not to exceed \$110.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- ii) The recertification exam must be completed no sooner than 6 months prior to the end of the five year period and no later than the end of the five year period.
 - iii) Only one such extension of certification during a single period of unemployment will be granted.
- 9) Continuing education information not received in the ABMDI Continuing Education Folder or entered in its entirety on the ABMDI website will be considered incomplete. Folders are available on the web site for download.
 - 10) Incomplete packets will be returned to the certificant and will not be audited. The certificant shall be given thirty days from receipt of the original packet in order to return a completed continuing education folder for audit. A penalty fee must accompany the returned packet in order for it to be processed.
 - 11) If the packet is still not complete or is received beyond the stated date, the certificant shall lose his/her certification status and all fees will be forfeited.
 - 12) In order to regain certification status, the individual shall reapply to the ABMDI and pay all current fees. They must complete the entire application process and sit for the entire certification again.
 - 13) Questionable continuing education submissions shall be forwarded to the Continuing Education Committee for review.
 - 14) All certificant's meeting recertification requirements shall receive a letter from the ABMDI office indicating that they are recertified for another five-year period. A new certification card and continuing education folder will be included in the mailing.
 - 15) It is recommended that certificants keep a photocopy of all continuing education documentation submitted.

XXV. Examination Security

- 1) Any company or individual contracted to perform duties related to ABMDI certification testing shall have no vested interest in the certification program or a conflict with the task assigned.
- 2) Security of the test bank shall be vested with a professional testing agency.
- 3) All test items shall be secured at the professional testing agencies secured server. Hard copies shall be secured in locked file cabinets in their office.
- 4) Access to test items shall be restricted to employees of the professional testing company.
- 5) Test questions are selected from a validated database.
- 6) In the case that a test item was to become public, an equivalent form of the compromised exam shall be created from the validated test bank and made available. Testing shall be suspended until such equivalent form is available.
- 7) The proctor is responsible for returning all test materials to the professional testing agency. He/she shall collect all test materials before the applicant is allowed to leave the room. These materials must be delivered to the professional testing agency.

XXVI. Code of Ethics and Conduct

- 1) The Code of Ethics and Conduct is set forth in the Bylaws.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- 2) As a means to promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its certificant, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics and Conduct, which shall be endorsed and adhered to by all certificants of the ABMDI.
 - a) Every certificant of the ABMDI shall refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABMDI.
 - b) Every certificant of the ABMDI shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of education, training, experience or fact. Misrepresentation of one or more criteria shall constitute a violation of this section of the code.
 - c) Every certificant of the ABMDI shall refrain from making statements that appear to represent the position of the ABMDI without specific authority first obtained in writing from the Board.
- 3) Any certificant of the ABMDI who has violated any of the provisions of the Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be liable to censure, suspension or revocation of their Certificate by action of the Board.

XXVII. **Confidentiality**

- 1) The applicant is required to sign a *Confidentiality Agreement* prior to sitting for the certification exam, agreeing that s/he shall not disclose exam content with other individuals. This agreement shall be retained in testing agency office.

Information that is not public knowledge and is learned through the Ethics Committee shall remain confidential.

Annually, Board members shall sign a *Confidentiality Agreement* regarding information learned about an applicant/certificant, which is not public knowledge, through his/her position on the board and to disclose any potential conflict of interest.

Individuals signing the *Confidentiality Agreement* may discuss information among themselves as necessary to complete their assignments, disclose information to a third party upon written consent of the applicant or certificant, or upon subpoena from a court of competent jurisdiction.

Any breach of confidentiality shall result in charges brought forth to the Ethics Committee.

XXVIII. **Applicant and Certificant Rights**

- 1) An individual submitting an application who does not meet the prerequisites shall be notified in writing of the deficiency. The application fee shall be returned to the individual.
- 2) A certificant has the right to examine his/her file at the ABMDI office upon written request and by appointment.
- 3) An applicant failing the certification examination has the right to discuss the examination/retest with the professional testing agency or Board member/staff. The applicant does not have a right to obtain a copy of his examination/retest.
- 4) A current certificant may submit a written request to the ABMDI office requesting retired status. They shall be required to have maintained good standing with the ABMDI for at least 10 years. If this status is granted by the Executive Director or their designee, their listing with the ABMDI will be changed to "D-ABMDI-Retired" or "F-ABMDI-Retired". Retired certificants will no longer be required to submit maintenance

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

fees or need to recertify. Retired certificants will maintain their access to the ABMDI list serve.

XXIX. Grievance Procedures

- 1) Appeals, complaints, inquiries and disputes should be sent in writing to the attention of the Executive Director, who shall determine if they fall within the Bylaws or Policy and Procedure guidelines.
- 2) If the appeal, complaint, inquiry or dispute can be answered within the prescribed guidelines, the Executive Director shall respond by letter via US Postal Mail. The President shall be made aware of the appeal, complaint, inquiry or dispute for informational purposes only.
- 3) If the appeal, complaint, inquiry or dispute cannot be handled within the prescribed guidelines, the information shall be forwarded to the President for determination.
- 4) If an individual is found guilty of misconduct or a charge, the Board shall have the right to impose sanctions up to and including revocation of certification.

XXX. Disclosure of Information

- 1) Information contained within applicant and certificant files shall be considered confidential and is not released to third parties.
- 2) Information contained within working files shall be available to any member who demonstrates a need for such information to conduct official business for the ABMDI with the exception of certificant files, Ethics Committee records and records deemed necessary to be attorney-client privileged communications.
- 3) Upon receipt of a subpoena or other legal process requesting the disclosure of information concerning an applicant or certificant, the ABMDI shall consult with legal counsel concerning remedies and duties imposed upon by the law.
- 4) Where the law requires disclosure of information, the individual shall be notified immediately of the inquiry and of the information provided.
- 5) The ABMDI President shall rule on any dispute between the requester and policy.
- 6) The Board shall approve in advance the release of Board meeting minutes, committee meetings, Treasurer or Executive Director reports, financial records or budgets to anyone other than an officer or Board member.
- 7) Certification status of all active and inactive individuals shall be made available on the ABMDI web site. They shall be listed as a Diplomate or Fellow, including the date of certification. Inquiries pertaining to certification status of an individual shall be directed to the web site listing.
- 8) A Directory shall be continually updated containing address, telephone, fax, email information and certification level for Diplomates and Fellows unless they have specifically requested in writing not to have their information published. The Directory is the property of the ABMDI and shall be available on the web site.
- 9) It is the responsibility of the certificant to notify the ABMDI office of any change in information.
- 10) Testing information shall be released to the applicant via US postal mail or email upon verification of the inquirer.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- 11) Copies of the Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual, as well as all records of revisions and proposed revisions to these documents, shall be made public record.
- 12) Certificant files shall be made available to the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) upon request, to comply with guidelines published in FSAB quality assurance standards.

XXXI. Quality System

- 1) The Executive Director shall, in a continuous manner, conduct evaluations and recommend changes to the Board that would enhance the certification process or office operations.
- 2) An outline of all substantive changes to the standards used to credential (evaluate), test and certify applicants shall be maintained indefinitely.
- 3) Staff shall conduct annual audits of files for accuracy and completeness. Any deficiencies shall be addressed immediately for resolution.

XXXII. Records Management

- 1) The Executive Director shall be responsible for the quality system of all ABMDI files. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board and supervises staff.
- 2) In accordance with Article XV of the Bylaws, staff shall be responsible for keeping permanent records of all meetings of the Board, a record of all actions taken by the Board without a meeting, and a record of all actions taken by committees.
- 3) The Board shall retain all documents submitted in compliance with any part of its program, except testing documents held by the professional testing agency, until the ABMDI ceases to exist including:
 - a) Bylaws and all amendments currently in effect
 - b) Articles of Incorporation and all amendments currently in effect
 - c) Most recent annual report delivered to the Secretary of State
 - d) Policy and Procedure Manual
 - e) Certificant files
 - f) Application files
 - g) Registry Files shall contain:
 - i) Application Form
 - ii) Notarized Employment Verification Form
 - iii) Professional Reference Form/Letter
 - iv) Completed, notarized Performance Training Checklist
 - v) Exam Request Form and communication
 - vi) Examination request to testing company
 - vii) Examination date/location/proctor information
 - viii) Examination Results
 - ix) Letter informing applicant of examination results

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

- x) Date that certificate was mailed
- xi) Recertification documentation
- h) Board Certification Files shall contain:
 - i) Application Form
 - ii) Notarized Employment Verification Form
 - iii) Forensic Specialist Reference
 - iv) Administrator/Supervisor Reference Form
 - v) Law Enforcement Reference Form
 - vi) Copy of at least an Associate Degree
 - vii) Examination date/location/proctor information
 - viii) Exam Request Form
 - ix) Examination request to testing company
 - x) Examination Results
 - xi) Letter informing applicant of examination results
 - xii) Date that certificate was mailed
 - xiii) Recertification documentation
- i) Database of same
- j) Examination dates
- k) Proctor Information
- l) Minutes of Board meetings
- m) Records deemed of historical significance
- n) Annual reports of all committees, Treasurer, and Executive Director
- o) Financial records including monthly financial statements issued by the Executive Director
- p) Audit reports
- q) Copies of ABMDI newsletters
- r) Committee histories
- s) Advisory Council histories
- t) Web site, current and archived information
- u) Other information deemed pertinent to ABMDI certification
- 4) Inactive, defaulted and expired files may be converted to electronic records or stored off-site.

XXXIII. **Document Retention Policy**

1) **Purpose**

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

This Document Retention Policy ("Policy") represents the policy of ABMDI regarding the retention and disposal of records and electronic documents. This Policy is made to comply with the requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which makes it a crime to alter, cover up, falsify, or destroy any document with the intent of impeding or obstructing any official proceeding. In addition, and in general, the purposes of this document retention policy are for ABMDI to ensure that necessary records and documents are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed by ABMDI or are of no value are discarded at the proper time.

2) Policy

General Guidelines.

Records should not be kept if they are no longer needed for the operation of the organization or required by law. Unnecessary records should be eliminated from the files. The cost of maintaining records is an expense which can grow unreasonably if good housekeeping is not performed. A mass of records also makes it more difficult to find pertinent records.

From time to time, ABMDI may establish retention or destruction policies or schedules for specific categories of records in order to ensure legal compliance, and also to accomplish other objectives, such as preserving intellectual property and cost management. Several categories of documents that warrant special consideration are identified below. While minimum retention periods are established, the retention of the documents identified below and of documents not included in the identified categories should be determined primarily by the application of the general guidelines affecting document retention, as well as the exception for litigation-relevant documents and any other pertinent factors. All officers, directors, and employees are expected to comply fully with any corporately-approved record retention and destruction policies and schedules.

Exception for Litigation-Relevant Documents.

All officers, directors, and employees should note the following exception to any stated destruction schedule: If you believe, or ABMDI informs you, that ABMDI records are relevant to litigation or potential litigation (i.e., a dispute that could result in litigation), then all scheduled destruction of potentially relevant records must cease and you must preserve those records until it is determined that the records are no longer needed. This exception supersedes any previously or subsequently established destruction schedule for those records.

Minimum Retention Periods for Specific Categories of Records.

1. Organizational Documents

Organizational records include ABMDI's Articles of Incorporation, By-laws and IRS Form 1023, Application for Exemption. Organizational records should be retained permanently. IRS regulations require that Form 1023 be available for public inspection upon request.

2. Tax Records

Tax records include, but may not be limited to, documents concerning payroll, capital asset purchases and sales, expenses, proof of contributions made by donors, accounting procedures, and other documents concerning ABMDI's revenues. All records, including income tax and informational returns (including Form 990), payroll taxes and supporting documentation should be retained permanently.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

3. Employment Records/Personnel Records

ABMDI should keep personnel files that reflect performance reviews and any complaints brought against ABMDI or individual employees under applicable state and federal statutes. ABMDI should also keep in the employee's personnel file all final memoranda and correspondence reflecting performance reviews and actions taken by or against personnel. A copy of the Employee Handbook, and each revision thereof, should be retained permanently. Employment applications should be retained for three years. Retirement and pension records should be kept permanently. Other employment and personnel records should be retained for seven years after separation from service.

4. Members, Board and Board Committee Meetings

Meeting minutes should be retained permanently.

5. Certificant Records

ABMDI should keep certification applications, ethics investigations and other certification records for seven years after an individual ceases to be a certificant of ABMDI.

6. Contracts

Real Estate purchase and sale contracts and records should be retained permanently. Leases and general contracts, along with supporting documentation, should be retained for seven years after termination.

7. Legal Documents

Litigation documents should be retained for seven years after the close of the matter. Court orders and judgments should be retained permanently, as should legal opinions.

8. Intellectual Property Documents

Intellectual Property documents, including trademark and copyright registrations, should be retained permanently.

9. Insurance

Expired insurance policies, insurance records, accident reports, claims and related documentation should be kept permanently.

10. Audit Records

Audit reports and financial statements should be kept permanently.

11. Banking and Accounting

Accounts payable ledgers, accounts receivable ledgers, bank statements, bank reconciliations, electronic funds transfers, cancelled checks and credit card records should be kept for seven years.

12. Correspondence

Unless correspondence falls under another category listed elsewhere in this policy, correspondence should generally be saved for three years.

Storage of Records.

1. Tangible Records

Tangible records which are active should be stored in the main office. Inactive tangible records may be stored in an off-site storage facility.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

2. Electronic Records

All E-mails sent or received should be reviewed within ninety (90) days after receipt or sending. E-mails related to the conduct of ABMDI's business and falling into one of the categories listed in Section 3 of this Policy should be retained, and e-mails not falling into one of the foregoing categories should be deleted. Those e-mails being retained should either be printed and stored as tangible evidence or backed up and stored electronically on a server, disk or other media. This back-up should be performed as needed to ensure that important documents are retained and in any case, not less often than annually.

Destruction/Deletion.

1. Tangible records

Tangible records should be destroyed by shredding or some other means that will render them unreadable and unable to be reconstructed.

2. Electronic records

ABMDI will direct its IT contractors to ensure that electronic records are properly and permanently destroyed. All duplicate records must be destroyed along with the originals.

Administration of Policy

The Executive Director shall be responsible for administering and overseeing this Policy, including performing the following functions:

- Implementing the Policy;
- Ensuring that employees are properly educated, understand and follow the Policy;
- Providing oversight on actual retention and destruction;
- Ensuring proper storage of documents;
- Suspending the destruction of documents upon foreseeable litigation; and
- Communicating with the Board of Directors regarding any issues pertaining to the implementation and administration of the Policy.

All questions relating to document retention and/or destruction should be directly addressed to the Executive Director.

Adoption of Policy

1. Executive Committee Adoption

The Executive Committee of ABMDI has adopted this Policy as of the date set forth below. Amendments to this Policy may be adopted in conformance with ABMDI's Bylaws .

XXXIV. ABMDI Fee Schedule

Registry Application Fee	\$50
Replacement Application Fee	\$15
Registry Exam Fee	\$350
Registry Retest Fee	\$110/section, but not to exceed the cost of the original exam

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Board Certification Application Fee	\$100
Board Certification Examination Fee	\$400
Board Certification Retest Fee	\$110/section, but not to exceed the cost of the original exam
Paper/Pencil Examination	\$50/person
Rush Fee for Examination	\$50/person
Recertification Administrative Fee	\$25 (every five year period)
Recertification Test Fee (if unemployed at time of recertification)	\$110
Recertification Retest Fee	\$20 per section not to exceed \$110
Annual Maintenance Fee	\$50
Late Fee	\$25
Replacement Certificate Fee	\$25

XXXV. Test Development

The ABMDI contracted with a professional test development and validation agency to develop two levels of a certification test for medicolegal death investigators based on criteria demonstrated to be objective, valid and reliable.

Test Development Agency

Occupational Research and Assessment, Inc. (ORA)
Steven C. Clark, Ph.D., Director
124 Elm Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307
231-796-2822

Advisory Committee

The test development committee consisted of 14 veteran medicolegal death investigators from medical examiner and coroner jurisdictions representing various geographic locations throughout the country. The subject matter experts were nominated by their medical examiner, pathologist or coroner based on knowledge, experience and competence within the field.

Purpose of the Certification Examination

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators Policy and Procedures Manual

The purpose of the certification exam is to verify the knowledge, skills and abilities of medicolegal death investigators pursuant to a specific domain of knowledge.

Domain of Knowledge

There was no domain of knowledge for medicolegal death investigators prior to 1994. A technical working group of 144 professionals from across the country participated in a National Medicolegal Panel to establish guidelines. The project was co-sponsored by the National Institutes of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. After being selected, the Advisory Council then used a national survey distributed to medical examiners and coroners to create and validate a domain of knowledge.

ORA Test Development Process

Dr. Clark used the following nine procedures to develop and validate the certification test for medicolegal death investigators.

Phase 1: Needs/Occupational Analysis

Phase 1 had two objectives. First, the assessment of research need, and second, the development of a conceptual framework for the field of medicolegal death investigation. This was accomplished by literature review and a national survey of medical examiner and coroner offices

Phase 2: Job and Task Analysis

Using a DACUM (**D**eveloping **A** **C**urricul**U**M) method, "judges" from various geographic locations and employment circumstances (medical examiner/coroner) participated in a 2- day workshop to develop the skill and knowledge requirements for individuals who wished to call themselves medicolegal death investigators. The result of the workshop was the job profile, which consisted of duties and tasks considered essential for a professional medicolegal death investigator.

Phase 3: Curriculum Validation

The job profile or task-list was used to develop a survey instrument for national distribution. The development team identified respondents as experts in the field of medicolegal death investigation.

Phase 4: Objective Test Item Writing and Coding

Because there was no existing set of test questions available, the Advisory Council developed a test bank using data collected during the DACUM process. These written items were then coded to specific tasks.

Phase 5: Item Validation

Occupational Research and Assessment employs two types of validity evidence: content and criterion-related.

Content validity is related to how adequately the content of, and responses to, the test samples the medicolegal domain. All drafted test items were reviewed for bias and edited before the Advisory Council was reconvened to review each item in the test bank. To quantify each test item as valid, items were then run through a rating process to establish a point value for *importance* (for success as a medicolegal

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

death investigator), *frequency* (of performance on the job), *difficulty* (compared to other questions in the test bank) and *level* (of education required to answer each item successfully). This detailed, systematic, critical inspection of test items is the single best way to determine content validity.

Phase 6: Test Construction

After national validation of the curriculum and test item writing, rating and review, the Advisory Council was directed through an item selection process. The DACUM research identified the percentage of test items required (by duty and task) on the test. The sorting process identified the highest rated (by importance) items within each duty area as well as the "easy" to "difficult" item progression. Using this data the Advisory Council had the difficult task of granting "final approval" to each item with acceptable importance ratings. Once the final list of items was identified, each went through final edit and the correct answer was verified.

Phase 7: Pilot Testing

A final draft of the certification examination was pilot-tested at national training Conferences (i.e., Saint Louis University's Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course). Individuals submitted complete demographic information, years of experience as a medicolegal death investigator, specific duties and tasks performed on the job, as well as educational background and training programs completed/certifications held. This data was used to verify pilot test results.

Phase 8: Standards Setting

The certification examination is a "criterion-referenced" test (as opposed to a "norm-referenced"). Using data from the pilot testing and ratings of each item on the test, the Advisory Council established and set criterion levels for each section of the examination. Test takers must meet or exceed the criteria set for each of the eight sections to achieve passing each section of the test. In other words, a number of correct responses within each section will indicate "competent" levels of knowledge and skill. Each section may have different criteria cutting score.

Phase 9: Test Reliability

Initially, the test-retest method was established to estimate the reliability of the certification examination. Advisory Council members as well as others were asked to take the same examination twice. The scores provided a measure of stability (i.e. does an individual's score remain stable over time?). Because a data bank was used to create the tests, different examinations were administered to the same people and their scores correlated (i.e. does an individual's score remain consistent across versions of the same test?). The information provides a measure of equivalence.

The split-half estimates were then used for measures of internal consistency. This method basically takes the test and splits it in half, then the two halves are treated as separate tests for statistical comparisons. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient is used to estimate the reliability of a test half as long as the original. The Spearman-Brown statistic then estimates what the reliability of the entire test would be.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Conclusion

This process provides a basis for focusing on continual educational efforts in the actual needs of practitioners. The function of the evaluation instruments is two-fold: (1) to identify individuals who appear to possess the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to be a competent medicolegal death investigator, and (2) to identify areas of training needed for individuals who fall short of established standards. In addition, the validated test specifications will allow training efforts to focus on essential areas of knowledge. Training should follow a standardized curriculum for agencies, educational institutions, training organizations, and professional associations that wish to prepare individuals as professional medicolegal death investigators. The testing will ensure an adherence to a standard set of skills and knowledge.

Performance Examination

The Advisory Council designed the performance examination for the Board Certified test to measure the applicant's skills and practical ability in actual case assignments. Developing the performance section consisted of the following four phases.

Phase 1: Daily Work Analysis

The Advisory Council determined the kinds of cases handled routinely by medicolegal death investigators. Such cases involve scene investigations followed by written reports for deaths including natural, suicide, homicide or accident.

Phase 2: Case Construction

The Advisory Council constructed the cases so that the correct answer was predetermined. Each case consisted of analyzing a set of photographs and reviewing a written scenario about the death. The examinee must then determine (1) at least five items of evidence (2) ask at least ten questions to be asked of the suspect or witnesses (3) using medicolegal terms, write a brief description of the scene.

Phase 3: Case Validation

Each test case in the bank was administered to Advisory Council members. In order to validate the case as typical of routine cases handled by medicolegal death investigators and to ensure that the case provided sufficient information to allow a competent medicolegal death investigator to further investigate, Advisory Council members had to agree on its suitability and to reach the same opinion/conclusion for the case to be accepted for performance evaluation.

Using standardized answers or key words sheets developed by the Advisory Council to score open-ended items controls performance test reliability, two members are used to review the subjective items, which include the description of the scene and body. The two reviews are then correlated as a measure of consistency. The evidence and investigative questions are treated as objective "matching" type items and are subjected to the same methods as described for the written testing.

Phase 4: Pilot Testing

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

The test taker would receive three cases for examination from the following categories

(1) suicide (2) accident (3) homicide or (4) natural: The cases would be assigned from a bank of cases in each of the three categories. The cases were pilot tested at national training conferences.

Test Revisions

Dr. Clark reviews the performance of both certification exams every three years to identify areas that are not performing well. If necessary, the Advisory Council meets to address problems areas.

Every five years, a two-day test revision workshop is scheduled to review (1) the continued validity of the identified domain of knowledge and (2) that all test items are related to the validated domain. Items are then reviewed for importance and difficulty.

The ABMDI's decided that exams can be administered by an ORA trained proctor or by a certified proctor located with a college or university. To ensure that the certification examination remains free of bias, the ABMDI contracted with ORA to grade the examinations and maintain security of the test bank.

XXXVI. **ORA Web Testing Guide**

Suggested browser is Google Chrome, but Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer or Safari will also work. It is suggested that screen resolution be set at 1024 x 768 (or greater) so all pictures and graphics show properly.

If you have questions before the test or should problems arise call 231-796-2822.

Proctor:

- 1) Direct the browser to: <http://abmdi.org/testing>
- 2) Sign in using the supplied information.
- 3) Click the "Activate" button next to each user and test combination you'll be proctoring (there may be only one, there may be several).
- 4) Sign out.

Test Taker:

- 1) Direct the browser to (if it's not already there after the proctor signs out): <http://abmdi.org/testing>
- 2) Sign in using the supplied information.
- 3) Click the "Begin Test" button next to the test you wish to start.
- 4) Answer a question by clicking on the radio button next to the answer you choose or by entering text if it is a case or short answer test. If a question has pictures or graphics associated with it, click on the picture/graphic to view full size in another window. You may need to use the slider bars to move vertically or horizontally to view the entire picture/graphic or set of pictures (some cases have several photos and may take a couple moments to load). You can enlarge the pictures by dragging or by the "maximize" button in the top right hand corner of the browser. Sometimes with Internet

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Explorer, a black bar will obscure part of the photo. This can be eliminated by enlarging (even slightly) the picture.

- 5) Click either "Next" or "Previous" to navigate to another question or click a question number on the left to navigate directly to that question. (Questions in red have not been answered so you can use that as a check to make sure you've answered all questions.) You may review or change an answer by clicking directly on a question number. Do NOT review by repeatedly hitting the "back" button.
- 6) When completely finished go to the last question and click "Next".
- 7) Click "Submit". *A warning will appear if you have not answered all questions.*
- 8) You will return to the page listing available tests and click "View Results" to see how you did on that test or section.
- 9) Repeat this process until all tests have been completed.

Answers are saved as you go so there is no need for a backup answer sheet.

XXXVII. **ABMDI Proctor Responsibilities**

The proctor is legally accountable for the security of all examination forms and materials.

I, _____ did

receive one (1) ABMDI Registry Examination on

_____ (date), at _____ (time).

No one, including myself, witness or any other person, has revealed any examination information to anyone.

The ABMDI examination materials have been continually secured until the time of the examination at:

Proctor signature: _____

Witness signature: _____

XXXVIII. **Advisory Council Confidentiality Statement**

ABMDI Advisory Council
Confidentiality Statement

The Advisory Council of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators having access to the submitted documentation is obligated under ABMDI guidelines to treat all information not disclosed in public documents as confidential.

An Advisory Council or Board member has the duty to recuse himself or herself from participation in any event which there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

An Advisory Council or Board members shall refrain from exercising personal or public conduct adverse to the ABMDI.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This statement is signed at the annual meeting.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) Conflict of Interest Policy applies to members of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Committee Members, Advisory Council members or any other individual who is in a position to influence the policies and procedures of the ABMDI.

The following ethical and legal obligations pertain to each individual above while performing duties on behalf of the ABMDI:

1. Duty of Loyalty – each person should make decisions based on the best interests of ABMDI.
2. Duty of Confidentiality - The Advisory Council and Board of Director member having access to testing documents are obligated under ABMDI guidelines to treat all information not disclosed in public documents as confidential.

An Advisory Council or Board member has the duty to recuse himself or herself from participation in any event which there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

3. Duty to Disclose Conflict of Interest – each person should make an annual disclosure of any financial or commercial interest, whether actual or perceived, in any commercial interest or organization.

The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement must be signed annually by individuals named above. This document will be held in the ABMDI office by the Executive Director and can only be accessed by other Officers or Executive Committee members of ABMDI. Further access of these statements can be disclosed and open for discussion to the Board of Directors if a member of the Executive Committee or Officer deems it necessary to resolve a potential conflict of interest.

If a specific matter arises during meeting discussions where a conflict of interest is present, the individual should make a full disclosure of the conflict. The person may participate in the discussion at hand, but may not vote. If the conflict is deemed substantial, the President may disqualify the individual from participating in the discussion of the matter. If the conflict or the handling of the conflict is disputed, the matter shall be referred to the Ethics Committee for review.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

I attest that I have read ABMDI's Conflict of Interest Policy. I agree to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information deemed as such by ABMDI Bylaws and disclose any outside interests that may appear bias to any discussions or actions that I may participate in associated ABMDI business.

I do not, nor have any immediate family members or business partners, have a material financial interest that is likely to be impacted by a decision of a committee or board upon which I serve.

Exceptions to this statement are: _____

I do not, nor do I have any immediate family member or business partner, that expects to serve within the next 12 months as an officer, director, chair or consultant, nor has served as such in the last 12 months, with any commercial entity that is likely to be impacted by a decision of a committee or board upon which I serve.

Exceptions to this statement are: _____

If matters arise in which I have, or may have, a perceived conflict of interest, I will disclose this conflict when the matter arises. I may be asked by the President to abstain from voting on the matter. I understand that omissions or a violation of this Policy shall result in referral of the matter to the Ethics Committee for review.

I also attest to the fact that I have read and am familiar with the ABMDI Policy Manual and I agree to abide by all ABMDI Policies

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

XXXIX. Suggested Reading List for Registry Exam

- Caplan, Y. Medicolegal Death Investigation -Treatise In the Forensic Sciences. The Forensic Sciences Foundation Press: Colorado Springs, CO, 1997.
- Clark, S.C., Ernst, M.F., Haglund, W.O., Jentzen, J.M. Medicolegal Death Investigator: A Systematic Training Program for the Professional Death Investigator. Occupational Research and Assessment, Inc.: Big Rapids, MI, 1996.
- DiMaio, D., DiMaio, V. Forensic Pathology, 2nd Edition. Elsevier Science Publishing Co.: New York, NY, 2006.
- DiMaio, V.J.M. Gunshot Wounds: Practical Aspects of Firearms, Ballistics and Forensic Techniques. Elsevier Science Publishing Co.: New York, NY, 2015.
- Dix, J., Ernst, M.F., Handbook for Death Scene Investigators. Dept. of Pathology, University of Missouri: Columbia, MO, 2003.
- Dix, J., Calaluce, R. Guide to Forensic Pathology. CRC Press. Boca Rattan, FL. 1998
- Eliopulos, L. Death Investigator's Handbook. Paladin Enterprises: Boulder, CO, 2003.
- Flinger, C., Haglund, W.O., Reay, D. "Death Notification." American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology. 11(4): 343-347.
- Froede, R. Handbook of Forensic Pathology. 2nd edition. College of American Pathologists: Northfield, IL, 1995.
- Geberth, V. Practical Homicide Investigation: Tactics, Procedures and Forensic Techniques, 3rd ed. CRC Press: Boca Raton, FL, 2015.
- Grossman, C. Blond's Medical Guides: Physiology. New York: 1995.
- Hanzlick, R. Protocol for Writing Cause of Death Statements. College of American Pathologists: Northfield, IL, 1995.
- James S. and Nordby, J. Forensic Science- An Introduction to Scientific and Investigative Techniques. CRC Press. Boca Ratan, FL. 2003.
- Jason, D. "The Role of the Medical Examiner/Coroner in Organ and Tissue Procurement for Transplantation." American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology.15(3): 192-202.
- Jentzen, J. "Forensic Toxicology: An Overview and Algorithmic Approach." American Journal of Clinical Pathology. 92 (Supplement 1) S48-S55.
- Knight, Bernard. Forensic Pathology. Oxford University Press; 2nd edition January 15, 1996.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Mittleman, R., et al. "Practical Approach to investigative Ethics and Religious Objections to Autopsy." *Journal of Forensic Science*. 37(3): 824-829.

Moenssens, Andre, Henderson, Carol, Star, James. *Scientific Evidence in Civil and Criminal Cases*. West Publishing Company; 4th edition January 1, 1995

Nation Guidelines for Death Investigation. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Washington DC: 2011.

Saferstein, R. *Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science*. Eighth Edition. Prentice-Hall, Inc.: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 2014

Shemonsky, N. "Jurisdiction on Military Institutions." *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*. 14(1): 39-42.

Spitz, W.U. *Medicolegal Investigation of Death: Guidelines for the Application of Pathology to Crime Investigation*. Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, IL, 2005.

Wagner, S. *Color Atlas of the Autopsy*. CRC Press. Boca Raton, FL. 2004

XL. Skills Task List for Registry Examination

General Information:

Title: Medicolegal Death Investigator

Type: Objective Type (paper and pencil)

Items: 240

Time: 4 hours

AREAS COVERED:

	%OF TEST	#OF ITEMS
A. Interacting with Federal, State and Local Agencies	3%	10
B. Communicating	10%	25
C. Interacting with Families	8%	20
D. Investigating Techniques	33%	70
E. Identifying and Preserving Evidence	10%	25
F. Maintaining Ethical and Legal Responsibilities	9%	20
G. Demonstrating Scientific Knowledge	25%	60
H. Coping with Job Related Stress	2%	10

A. INTERACTING WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

A1. Determine jurisdictional responsibility

Includes the proper methods used to determine medical examiner/coroner jurisdiction.

A2. Determine the scope of agency responsibility

Includes the proper methods used to determine deaths reportable to the medical examiner/coroner office.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

A3. Report critical data

Includes proper methods of defining critical data and determining how data is to be reported.

A4. Share critical data

Includes proper methods of releasing critical data to outside agencies including forms used.

A5. Identify support agencies

Includes deaths reportable to outside agencies, outside agencies that support the medical examiner/coroner office, as well as decedent's families.

A6. Collect essential agency data

Includes methods used to define essential data, distribution report forms, and other agency interactions.

A7. Arrange for organ and tissue procurement

Includes organ procurement agencies, forms, recovery timing, organ and tissue types typically used in transplant and research.

A8. Certify the death (completing the death certificates)

Includes the death certificate format, release timing, and proper completion techniques.

B. COMMUNICATING

B9. Notify next of kin

Includes methods used to make proper notification, identification of legal next-of-kin, and release of information.

B10. Maintain confidentiality

Includes methods used to maintain confidentiality within an office and external to office.

B11. Interact with law enforcement personnel

Includes agency cooperation practices, statutory responsibility, and objectivity between agencies involved in the investigation.

B12. Interact with funeral directors

Includes strategies used to interact with funeral directors, as well as roles and responsibilities for families, investigator and funeral home directors.

B13. Write narrative reports

Includes content of the narrative investigative report, its structure and use in the overall investigation of a death.

B14. Complete report forms

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Includes the proper use of report forms within the medical examiner/coroner office as well as the use of report forms as shared documents.

B15. Use effective interviewing skills (witnesses)

Includes techniques and strategies used to interview witnesses involved in the death investigation, including family, friends and associates.

B16. Communicate with the pathologist

Includes basic forensic medical terminology and the relationships that exist between the medical examiner/coroner investigators and the forensic pathologist who performs the autopsy.

B17. Maintain relations with the media

Includes strategies and techniques used to work with the media regarding public information release and accountability.

B18. Notify/Communicate with treating physician

Includes general medical terminology typically used by emergency room physicians as well as family practice physicians. Also included, the relationship that exists between the physician who last treated the decedent and the investigation.

B19. Utilize telephone etiquette

Includes proper use of the telephone within the professional medical examiner/ coroner office, strategies used in gathering information over the phone, and methods used to communicate with individuals over the phone.

C. INTERACTING WITH FAMILIES

C20. Obtain information

Includes methods used to gather investigative information from family members during the investigation (a time of stress).

C21. Explain procedures to families

Includes strategies used to assist families to understanding medical examiner/coroner procedures related to the autopsy and the investigative process.

C22. Respect family requests

Includes various types of religious objections to the autopsy and strategies used to overcome those objections (as necessary).

C23. Report findings to the family

Includes methods of interaction with family members during the release of medical examiner/coroner findings, autopsy results and appropriate timetables for release of additional information.

C24. Prepare family for identification viewing

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Includes strategies used by investigators to inform families as to the condition of the decedent and the possible results linked to viewing the body.

C25. Respond to family's reactions

Includes strategies used by investigators to support family members during and after the identification viewing.

C26. Perform an investigative follow-up interview

Includes methods of conducting the follow-up interview with family members, friends and associates of the decedent.

D. INVESTIGATING DEATHS

D27. Determine scene safety (public health)

Includes methods used to determine scene safety prior to entry.

D28. Secure the scene

Includes methods used to interact with support agencies in the establishment of the scene.

D29. Validate death

Includes methods used to assure death has been established and documented.

D30. Identify human remains

Includes knowledge of basic anthropology.

D31. Photograph the scene and the body

Includes proper uses of photography, of both scene and body. Also includes basic knowledge of photographic equipment and usage.

D32. Conduct the physical examination

Includes proper methods of conducting the on-scene physical examination of body

D33. Document the death scene

Includes systematic methods of documenting the death scene for later use by investigative staff and outside agency personnel.

D34. Write descriptive information

Includes strategies used to write investigative reports that describe the scene, including the environment and the body.

D35. Draw specimens

Includes standard medical protocol and methods used to draw fluids (blood, vitreous, and urine) from the decedent for analysis by lab personnel.

D36. Identify forensic instrumentation

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Includes personal protective equipment, forensic equipment, forms, and scene processing aids.

D37. Recognize manners of death

Includes the five typically recognized manners of death and standard methods of determining each.

D38. Investigate multiple fatalities

Includes general knowledge of mass disaster protocol.

E. IDENTIFYING AND PRESERVING EVIDENCE

E39. Distinguish between personal property and evidence

Includes documentation procedures used to maintain evidence and personal property and the distinguishing factors between each.

E40. Ensure chain of custody

Includes need for chain of custody, methods of maintaining chain, and rationale for maintaining chain of custody

E41. Facilitate analysis of evidence

Includes proper evidence collection techniques for various types of evidence.

F. MAINTAINING ETHICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

F42. Maintain the dignity of the deceased

Includes methods used by investigators to maintain the dignity of the deceased at the scene and throughout the investigation.

F43. Dispose of unclaimed/unidentified remains

Includes common methods and requirements for disposing of unclaimed and/or unidentified remains.

F44. Provide testimony

Includes strategy used by investigators, medical examiner/coroner offices when served with a subpoena.

F45. Identify potential conflicts of interest

Includes relationships between medical examiner/coroner offices with such outside service providers are: funeral homes, ambulance services, cleaning companies, etc.

F46. Safeguard personal property against theft

Includes methods used to protect decedent's property, until release.

F47. Project a positive/professional image

Includes important factors involved in the perception of the medical examiner/coroner office by the community and support agencies.

G. DEMONSTRATING SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

G48. Demonstrate knowledge of forensic pathology

Includes basic forensic medical terminology, traumatic injuries, traumatic artifacts, therapeutic interventions, antemortem injuries on the body, postmortem artifacts on the body, time of death establishment. Decomposition, signs of death, systematic examination of external body, body systems, medical services, and various types of death.

G49. Demonstrate knowledge of forensic science

Includes basic forensic science terminology, the role of outside forensic experts in the medicolegal death investigation, drug names and terminology (Physician's Desk Reference), legal laboratory tests, gunshot wounds, and firearms documentation.

G50. Demonstrate medical knowledge

Includes basic medical terminology, universal precautions, medical anatomy, internal anatomy, basic physiology, use of medical charts and reports, identification of human disease, common medications, and hospital bureaucracy.

H. COPING WITH JOB-RELATED STRESS

H51. Identify the warning signs of stress

Includes common warning signs of stress, mood swings, behavior changes, and effects on job and domestic life.

H52. Identify appropriate coping mechanism (for stress)

Includes lifestyle changing, professional assist programs, and inappropriate methods of coping with stress.

XLI. Suggested Reading List for Board Certification Exam

Bass, W. Human Osteology – A Laboratory Field Manual. Fourth Edition. Missouri Archaeological Society, Inc. 1995.

Byers, Steven. N. "Introduction to Forensic Anthropology – A Textbook". Third Edition. Allyn and Bacon Publishers, 2002.

Caplan, Y. Medicolegal Death Investigation -Treatise In the Forensic Sciences The Forensic Sciences Foundation Press: Colorado Springs, CO, 1997.

Case, M. et. al. Fatal Abusive Head Injuries in Infants and Young Children. American Journal of Pathology 22(2): 112-122, 2001.

Clark, S.C., Ernst, M.F., Haglund, W.D., Jentzen, J.M. Medicolegal Death Investigator: A Systematic Training Program for the Professional Death Investigator. Occupational Research and Assessment, Inc.: Big Rapids, MI, 1996.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

DiMaio, D., DiMaio, V. Forensic Pathology, 2nd Edition. Elsevier Science Publishing Co.: New York, NY, 2006.

DiMaio, V.J.M. Gunshot Wounds: Practical Aspects of Firearms, Ballistics and Forensic Techniques. Elsevier Science Publishing Co.: New York, NY, 2015.

Dix, J., Ernst, M.F., Handbook for Death Scene Investigators. Dept. of Pathology, University of Missouri: Columbia, MO, 2003.

Dix, J., Calaluce, R. Guide to Forensic Pathology. CRC Press. Boca Rattan, FL. 1998.

Eliopoulos, L. Death Investigator's Handbook. Paladin Enterprises: Boulder, CO, 2003.

Fingerprint Identification: (Eight basic Fingerprint Patterns).
Federal Bureau of Investigation. Washington, DC. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Flinger, C., Haglund, W.D., Reay, D. "Death Notification." American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology. 11(4): 343-347.

Froede, R. Handbook of Forensic Pathology. 2nd edition. College of American Pathologists: Northfield, IL, 1995.

Geberth, V. Practical Homicide Investigation: Tactics, Procedures and Forensic Techniques, 3rd ed. CRC Press: Boca Raton, FL, 2015.

Grossman, C. Blond's Medical Guides: Physiology. New York: 1995.

Hanzlick, R. Protocol for Writing Cause of Death Statements. College of American Pathologists: Northfield, IL, 1995.

Jason, D. "The Role of the Medical Examiner/Coroner in Organ and Tissue Procurement for Transplantation." American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology_15(3): 192-202.

Jentzen, J. "Forensic Toxicology: An Overview and Algorithmic Approach." American Journal of Clinical Pathology_ 92 (Supplement 1) S48-S55.

Knight, Bernard. Forensic Pathology. Oxford University Press; 2nd edition January 15, 1996

Mittleman, R., et al. "Practical Approach to investigative Ethics and Religious Objections to Autopsy." American Journal of Forensic Science_ 37(3): 824-829.

Moenssens, Andre, Henderson, Carol, Star, James. Scientific Evidence in Civil and Criminal Cases. West Publishing Company; 4th edition January 1, 1995

Moritz, Alan R. Classical mistakes in Forensic Pathology.
American Journal of Forensic Pathology. 2:299-307, 1981.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Nation Guidelines for Death Investigation. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Washington DC: 2011.

Saferstein, R. Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science. Prentice-Hall, Inc.: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 2014.

Saukko, P., Knight, B. "Knight's Forensic Pathology. Third Edition." Arnold Publishing, 2004.

Shemonsky, N. "Jurisdiction on Military Institutions." American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology. 14(1): 39-42.

Spitz, W.U. Medicolegal Investigation of Death: Guidelines for the Application of Pathology to Crime Investigation. Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, IL, 2005.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
<http://www.eeoc.gov> - Types of Discrimination

White, T., Folkens, P. Human Osteology. Second Edition. Academic Press: San Diego, CA 2000.

XLII. **Advanced Skills Task for Board Certification Examination**

A. Investigating Specific Death Scenes

- Investigate drug-related deaths
- Investigate child deaths
- Investigate motor vehicle deaths
- Investigate blunt force deaths
- Investigate firearms deaths
- Investigate fire deaths
- Investigate asphyxia deaths – hanging
- Investigate asphyxia deaths – drowning
- Investigate asphyxia deaths - mechanical
- Investigate asphyxia deaths – chemicals
- Investigate sharp force injury deaths
- Investigate electrocution deaths
- Investigate deaths by therapeutic complications
- Investigate deaths involving police action
- Investigate toxicological deaths (poison)

B. Investigating Multiple Fatalities

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Investigate deaths in plane/train/auto crashes

Investigate weather-related deaths

Investigate bomb-explosion deaths

C. Investigating Atypical Death Scenes

Investigate masqueraded deaths

Investigate media sensitive deaths

Investigate deaths by animals

Investigate deaths from infectious causes

D. Investigating Institutional Deaths

Investigate deaths in custody (wards of the state)

Investigate deaths in extended care facilities (nursing, group homes)

E. Demonstrating Leadership Skills

Demonstrate professionalism by positive role modeling and mentoring

Assume responsibility to recognize and correct deficiencies (procedures/policies)

Maintain high personal performance standards

Demonstrate positive professional interactions with coworkers and colleagues

F. Demonstrating Legal Knowledge

Solicit legal opinions

Demonstrate knowledge of legal procedures

Demonstrate knowledge of unique case problems

Review a death certification

Recognize agency jurisdiction

G. Communicating Skills

Demonstrate interviewing skills

Demonstrate report writing skills

Counsel families regarding autopsy findings and address concerns

H. Demonstrating Advanced Forensic Science Knowledge

Collect data/material for odontology

Collect data/material for anthropology/archeology

Collect data/material for toxicology

Collect data/material for entomology

Conduct postmortem identification

Collect data/material for serology

Collect data/material on ballistics/firearms

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators
Policy and Procedures Manual

Collect data/material for tool marks

Collect trace evidence (latents, alternative light)

Collect data/material using advanced photography