

72.020 Duty of person, hospital, or institution finding or possessing dead body -- Duties of coroner, law enforcement officer, embalmer, funeral director, or ambulance service.

- (1) Any person, hospital, or institution, finding or having possession of the body of any person whose death occurred under any of the circumstances defined in subsections (1) through (12) of KRS 72.025, shall immediately notify the coroner, or his deputy, and a law enforcement agency, which shall report to the scene within a reasonable time. No person shall remove the body or remove anything from the body until directed to do so by the coroner or his deputy, after the law enforcement agency is present or has failed, within a reasonable period of time, to respond.
- (2) The coroner shall take possession of any objects, medical specimens, or articles which, in his opinion, may be helpful in establishing the cause of death, and he can make or cause to be made such tests and examinations of said objects as may be necessary or useful in determining the cause of death. In the event that a criminal prosecution arises, all such objects and articles together with reports of any examinations made upon them, shall be retained by the coroner until their production in evidence is required by the prosecuting authority, unless otherwise directed by written order of the court in which such prosecution is pending.
- (3) Upon final disposition of each criminal prosecution under this section, the court shall by appropriate written order dispose of all objects retained under the provisions of this section.
- (4) If the law enforcement officer at the scene has probable cause to believe that one of the conditions in subsection (1) of this section exists and the coroner refuses to require a post-mortem examination, the officer shall immediately notify the county or Commonwealth attorney who may proceed pursuant to KRS 72.445.
- (5) In all cases listed under KRS 72.025 in which a licensed embalmer, funeral director, or ambulance service is notified and is the first person at the scene of death other than private citizens, he shall notify the coroner and if the death appears to fall within the categories established in subsections (1) through (12) of KRS 72.025, he shall notify a local law enforcement agency.

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History: Amended 1982 Ky. Acts ch. 195, sec. 2, effective July 15, 1982. -- Amended 1978 Ky. Acts ch. 93, sec. 7, effective June 17, 1978. -- Amended 1964 Ky. Acts ch. 127, sec. 1. -- Recodified 1942 Ky. Acts ch. 208, sec. 1, effective October 1, 1942, from Ky. Stat. sec. 528.