



COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON
JOB TITLE: CHIEF MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATOR
DATE: APRIL 1, 2026

EXEMPT (Y/N):	Yes	CLASSIFICATION:	CSC
DEPARTMENT:	District Attorney's Office	JOB CODE:	PO126
SUPERVISOR:	District Attorney	SALARY RANGE:	E02
UNION (Y/N):	No	LOCAL:	N/A

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: The Chief Medicolegal Death Investigator oversees the daily activities of administration and operations of the Columbia County Medical Examiner's Division. Responsible for conducting and overseeing all medicolegal death investigations in Columbia County, occurring under violent, questionable, or unexplained circumstances, and deaths unattended by physicians. Works closely with law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office providing expert witness testimony and legal documentation for court trials and appearances.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include the following. Other related duties may be assigned.

Conduct investigations of all manner of deaths; examine human remains, and work with law enforcement and funeral homes to take custody of the body, the personal effects of the deceased, and any weapons, instruments, vehicles, buildings, or premises which are believed to be involved in the death.

Conduct a forensic examination of the body; assist with recognition/protection/collection of evidence including recovery and identification of human remains; acquire/interpret medical records; preserve evidence relating to the cause and manner of death; obtain blood and other bodily fluid samples.

Interview relatives of the decedent, medical care providers, and provide necessary technical expertise in the investigation of violent or suspicious deaths.

Communicate with and provide updates to surviving family members when appropriate.

Receive and respond to phone calls from law enforcement and care facilities about deaths occurring under those jurisdictions.

Assist investigators on investigations, identifications, and follow-ups as necessary.

Act as department representative to task forces, councils, and other agencies as deemed necessary by the District Attorney.

Prepare, maintain, and provide state mandated death investigation reports including recording death certificate information.

Prepare and provide expert witness documentation for use in court trials and hearings. Testify in criminal and civil proceedings related to the cause and manner of death when needed.

Provide consultation, examination, and testimony in criminal cases when required.

Develop and implement MDI policies and procedures. Manage, monitor, and evaluate program effectiveness in meeting established objectives. Ensure compliance with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations.

Maintain a high level of confidentiality in regard to issues encountered.



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Complete necessary requirements to maintain certifications required to perform the position.

Assist in the departmental budget preparation process. Monitor fiscal operations of the department to remain within budgetary constraints. Research and pursue available funding options at the federal, state, and local level.

Follow all safety rules and procedures established for work areas. Comply with all relevant county policies and procedures. Ensure departmental compliance with county policies and procedures.

Maintaining regular attendance during the assigned work schedule is an essential requirement of this position. The ability to serve and meet in person with members of the general public, co-workers, and others is required.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: Supervision of employees is not a responsibility assigned to this position. Exercise functional or technical supervision over volunteer staff.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Work is performed with considerable independence under the general direction of the District Attorney who provides policy, procedure, and administrative direction and reviews performance.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The competencies below represent the required knowledge, skills, and/or abilities. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE: Equivalent to a four-year degree in a related field with advanced coursework in biology, physiology, or chemistry and five years' experience of increasing responsibility in local or state law enforcement agencies. Any satisfactory combination of experience and training, which demonstrates the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be substituted for the above requirements.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS: Experience as a nurse, physician's assistant, or paramedic Team player willing to work collaboratively toward shared goals and be open to diverse ideas and perspectives. Receive constructive feedback in a positive manner.

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS: Must have completed or must complete within one year of hire either the OCMDI, ABMDI, or IACME certified 40-hour course in death investigation. Must possess a valid driver's license and be insurable under the county's liability policy.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, AND ABILITY: Knowledge of human anatomy. Working knowledge of effective methods of medical and criminal investigations; state statutes regulating death investigations; basic rules of legal evidence; recordkeeping and reporting techniques.

Skill in business software programs and Microsoft Office products.

Ability to:

- Think conceptually and quickly to get to the heart of a problem.
- Set priorities and develop realistic solutions to problems.



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- Express ideas effectively, both verbally and in writing. Use sound judgment and not be afraid to take reasonable risks.
- Adapt to change or new situations and openly acknowledge and work through conflict. Accept responsibility and be able to work well with ambiguity.
- Work independently and as a team.
- Act in such a manner as to maintain the confidentiality of the records and issues and other matters that may be encountered.
- Develop and maintain harmonious and effective working relationships with employees, other agencies, county officials, and the general public.
- Effectively communicate with the State Medical Examiner Pathologists in relaying concerns of the family or the medical community ensuring adequate follow-up with any of the parties.
- Effectively and empathetically communicate information regarding policies, science, medicine, and state statutes while in emotionally charged situations with a variety of public and professional individuals.
- Effectively communicate through grand jury, inquest, and/or courtroom testimony.
- Draw biological specimens as required; accurately describe remains; examine mutilated, decomposed, and partial remains.
- Understand complex and detailed medical and legal terminology.

SPECIAL NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS: Must be able to pass a pre-employment background screening.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS: The physical demands described here must be met by an employee to perform the essential functions of this job successfully. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

Duties in the field require walking, stepping, squatting, bending, balancing, fine motor control, and the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull up to 50 pounds, lift and carry 50 pounds while climbing stairs, and push/pull 150 pounds. Duties involve exposure to confined spaces, working at heights, slippery and/or uneven surfaces, adverse weather conditions, environmental, biological, and/or health hazards, and unpleasant elements at death scenes. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, color vision, and the ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT: The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

Must be able to work 24/7 on call including weekends. Work is performed both indoors and outdoors in a variety of environments and in all weather conditions. Duties may involve strenuous physical activity, extensive driving or computer time, as well as exposure to unpleasant elements at death scenes. Frequent exposure to biological hazards. Commonly encounters grieving and/or volatile individuals at scenes, during the course of the investigation and subsequent investigation. Driving is a regular requirement of the position.

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform the essential job functions satisfactorily. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to



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perform the primary job functions herein described. Since every duty associated with this position may not be described herein, employees may be required to perform duties not specifically spelled out in the job description, but which may be reasonably considered to be incidental in the performing of their duties just as though they were actually written out in this job description.

*Columbia County has the right to revise this job description at any time.
This description does not represent in any way a contract of employment.*