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# MENDOCINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MATTHEW C. KENDALL, Sheriff-Coroner

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** 12-20-2023

**TO:** Field Services Division Personnel

**FROM:** Captain Gregory L. Van Patten #1184

**SUBJECT:** Modification to Report Writing Protocols \*UPDATE #3\*

1. It has been the practice to complete in-custody reports, missing persons reports, mental health detainment reports and coroner's case reports before the end of the shift and to complete all other reports before going on RDOs. Effective immediately that has been modified to the following:

- A. **In-custody reports, missing person's reports and mental health detainment reports (except with supervisor approval for a justified reason) need to be approved prior to the end of the shift.**

In the absence of an on-duty sector specific supervisor, a Deputy will contact another sector supervisor that is on-duty and request the report be reviewed and approved. The requesting Deputy should make any request as soon as practical and not wait until the end of their shift so that overtime becomes a necessity.

If a direct supervisor knows of a pending in-custody, missing person, mental health detainment or coroner's case report (that needs review outside of the provisions of 1 B.), the supervisor shall distribute the workload among their on-duty Deputies to allow for the report to be written and subsequently reviewed by that specific supervisor during their shift absent the use of overtime. When that is not reasonably possible, this supervisor (going off-duty) shall notify another on-duty supervisor of the pending report that will need to be reviewed.

A supervisor shall have the discretion to allow a Deputy to delay the completion of an in-custody report, missing person's report and mental health detainment report under justifiable reasons (such as needing rest for improved work product). When this occurs, the delay will not be for more than 12 hours as a general rule. The supervisor approving the delay will send an email to Patrol Records, the area's supervisor email account (central sup, north sup, coast sup) and the Field Services Division Commander. This email will reference the case number, the reason for the delay and when the Deputy will be returning to complete the report.

**B. Coroner Case reports should generally be completed/approved prior to the end of the shift if possible.**

In light of some new fiscal limitations and changes to report submission times please note the following deadlines for coroner's case report submission on cases when a decedent will be autopsied. Death reported:

**Wednesday after 0600 hours, Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday**, the report needs to be completed by **Monday at 0700 hours**.

**Monday and Tuesday, Wednesday prior to 0600 hours** the report needs to be completed by **the end of the shift**.

When possible, complete the report as soon as you can but when overtime usage becomes a factor then use the above guidelines. Please remember the timely submission/approval of coroner's case reports helps the Chief Deputy Coroner to close and process cases for families as quickly as possible as not all cases involve an autopsy.

In the cases of autopsy or review by the Pathologist, the Pathologist needs the report, Coroner's Notification PDF form, medical records and photographs prior to Wednesday, which is when autopsies are performed. This allows the Pathologist time to review such records/reports prior to determining the correct procedure to perform on a case by case basis.

Any coroner's case related photographs taken by the investigator(s) will be uploaded to Evidence.com prior to the end of that employee's shift wherein the coroner's case was taken.

In **ALL CASES** send a detailed email (but not a copy of your report) by the end of your shift, by using the Coroner's Notification PDF form or following the below format, to the Field Services Division Commander, Chief Deputy Coroner (ISB Lieutenant), Detective Sergeant, Coroner Investigative Technician, and area's supervisor email account (central sup, north sup, coast sup) before the end of your shift. This allows fielding of calls related to cases that have not yet been written. Include the following information in an independent email only if the Coroner's Notification PDF is unavailable:

Case number:

Name of decedent:

Date of Birth:

Date of Death:

Place of Death (address):

NOK Names and contact info:

Has NOK been notified:

Mortuary:

Brief synopsis of circumstances:

Example: Single/multiple motor vehicle accident over the side of the road. Decedent suffered major head/torso trauma. Passengers alive and at XX hospital. CHP is investigating cause of accident.

Example: Decedent's death appears natural as she was found in bed. Decedent suffered from years of COPD, heart failure, and was a chronic drinker. Dr. Smith was may have last attended decedent 15 days ago and was unavailable for contact.

Example: Decedent appears to be a victim of a homicide with multiple gunshot wounds to the chest. He died at AHUV emergency room and full body x-rays were obtained. UPD has a criminal case.

Please include anything you think the Chief Deputy Coroner MIGHT get questions about from the family or someone calling in on the case.

**C. All other reports are not required to be completed/approved prior to the end of the shift or prior to going on RDOs.**

The expectation is that the employee will have these reports completed prior to the end of the employee's next scheduled shift whenever reasonably possible without the usage of overtime. When it is not possible to have the report completed by this guideline then the employee's supervisor shall be notified verbally or by email. The supervisor will decide whether the Deputy can further delay the completion of the report. Supervisors will audit the report writing system for uncompleted reports and manage the employees' workload to allow for these reports to be completed during their next scheduled shift.