

REGIONAL FORENSIC CENTER KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION STATEMENT

“to provide accurate, timely, compassionate, and professional death investigative services for the citizens of Knox County and the counties it serves; identify and develop an understanding of sudden, unexpected and unnatural deaths and educate the public about those deaths; assist law enforcement agencies in their investigations; offer consults to medical professionals and attorneys; render unbiased opinions and testimony in court and extend research support for local and national medical, legal, academic, and law enforcement organizations.”

INTRODUCTION

The Knox County Medical Examiner’s Office has been in existence since the early 1950’s when it operated out of a small one-room morgue. In 1998, the Regional Forensic Center began operating out of the University of Tennessee Medical Center. In 2014, the Knox County government, with financial support from the State of Tennessee, built an 18,000 sq. ft. state of the art facility located at 2761 Sullins Street in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center (RFC) serves as the Office for the Chief Medical Examiner for Knox and Anderson counties. The RFC provides autopsy and consultative service for approximately 25 counties in East and Middle Tennessee.

The Knox County RFC operates 24/7/365. We always have at least one autopsy technician at the facility and a medico-legal death investigator available to respond to death scene investigations. In addition, there is a Medical Examiner/Forensic Pathologist on duty or on-call 24/7/365.

The RFC is a department of the Knox County government reporting to the Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. The previous Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett was instrumental in securing funding and leading the development of the new RFC building and assuring appropriate staffing and funding for RFC operations.

In June of 2017, the office received full accreditation (with no deficiencies) from the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). This marks 9 years of continuous accreditation. The next on-site accreditation visit for the office will be in the summer of 2020.



ORGANIZATION

The RFC has 30 full-time staff consisting of a Senior Director, Chief Medical Examiner, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, two Assistant Medical Examiners/Forensic Pathologists, Forensic Quality Improvement Manager, Business Office Manager, 3 Forensic Clerks, Medico-legal Death Investigator Manager, 7 Medico-legal Death Investigators, Autopsy Technician Manager, 10 Autopsy Technicians, and Administrative Assistant. In addition, we have a contract, part-time Forensic Anthropologist.

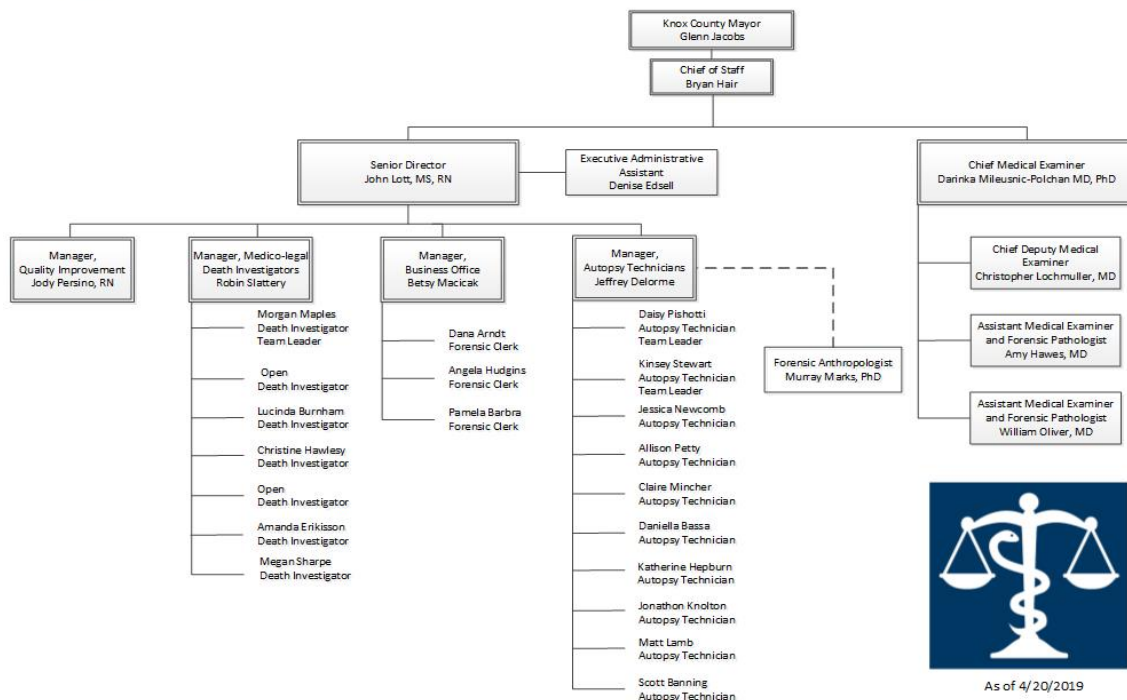
All our Medical Examiners are board certified by the American Board of Pathology in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and the American Board of Pathology Certification in Forensic Pathology. In addition, they hold appointments as either Associate or Assistant Professors with the University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine.

Our Forensic Anthropologist is board certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA). In addition, he has a faculty appointment with the Department of General Dentistry's Forensic Odontology program in the Graduate School of Medicine at the University of Tennessee.

Our Medico-legal Death Investigators are required to become certified by the American Board of Medico-legal Death Investigators (ABMDI). The RFC's Medico-legal Death Investigator Manager is a Fellow with ABMDI. Five of our Medico-legal Death Investigators (MDI) are Diplomats with ABMDI and one of our Medico-legal Death Investigators are in the process of being certified by ABMDI.



REGIONAL FORENSIC CENTER KNOX COUNTY



As of 4/20/2019



FUNCTION OF THE REGIONAL FORENSIC CENTER

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center serves the citizens, by investigating deaths that are unnatural and/or unexpected; such deaths have implications to the greater community. This task begins with careful investigation at the scene of death, supplemented when appropriate, by autopsy examination, toxicology, and other testing. The RFC Staff helps the community by determining the cause and manner of death, recognizing and collecting evidence needed for adjudication, defining public health and product safety risks, and providing compassionate services to families.

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center is responsible for the investigation and certification of cause and manner of death of all sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious, or unnatural deaths that occur in Knox and Anderson Counties. The cause of death is a disease, injury, drug toxicity, or combination of factors that causes a physiologic derangement severe enough to result in death. The manner of death refers to the circumstances surrounding how the death came about and is divided into five categories: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined.



KNOX COUNTY REGIONAL FORENSIC CENTER COVERAGE AREA

The Knox County RFC also provides autopsy and consultative services for similar-type deaths occurring in 26 East and Middle Tennessee counties at the written request of the local authorities. In 2018, we provided autopsy or consultative services for the following counties:

Jurisdictional: Knox and Anderson counties

Jurisdictional counties are defined as those counties where Dr. Mileusnic is the Medical Examiner for the county and where the Regional Forensic Center provides primary medico-legal death investigation.

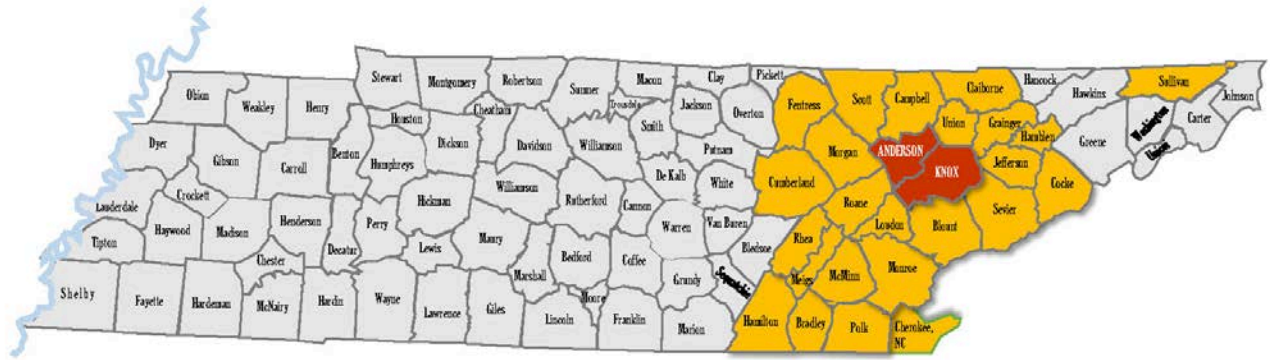
Non-Jurisdictional:

Blount	Hamblen	Polk
Bradley	Hamilton	Rhea
Campbell	Jefferson	Roane
Claiborne	Loudon	Scott
Cocke	McMinn	Sevier
Cumberland	Meigs	Sullivan
Fentress	Monroe	Union
Grainger	Morgan	Cherokee, NC

Non-Jurisdictional counties are defined as those counties where there is an appointed Medical Examiner, which is not Dr. Mileusnic or one of the other Regional Forensic Center Deputy/Assistant Medical Examiners. The appointed Medical Examiner, who is a Tennessee licensed physician, is responsible for conducting medico-legal investigative activities in their county. They may or may not have Medico-legal Death Investigators working for them in their county.

NOTE: Because Knox County has a Level 1 Trauma Center and referral hospitals, many cases come from the Non-Jurisdictional Counties to these centers. The Knox County Regional Forensic Center then works with the counties where the incident occurred to coordinate Medical Examiner activities. In addition, we provide private autopsies for people requesting that service from the counties listed above.





RED COUNTIES Chief Medical Examiner Jurisdiction
YELLOW COUNTIES Autopsy and Consultative Services
GRAY COUNTIES No Services Provided



REPORTING DEATHS AND DEATH STATUTES IN TENNESSEE

Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) § 38-7-108. Death under suspicious, unusual, or unnatural circumstances.

Any physician, undertaker, law enforcement officer, or other person shall immediately notify the County Medical Examiner or the District Attorney General, the local police or the sheriff, who in turn shall notify the County Medical Examiner; IF they have knowledge of the death of any person:

- *From violence or trauma of any type,*
- *Suddenly when in apparent health*
- *Sudden unexpected death of infants and children*
- *Deaths of prisoners or persons in state custody*
- *Deaths on the job or related to employment*
- *Deaths believed to represent a threat to public health*
- *Deaths where neglect or abuse of extended care residents are suspected or confirmed*
- *Deaths where the identity of the person is unknown or unclear*
- *Deaths in any suspicious/unusual/unnatural manner*
- *Found dead*
- *Where the body is to be cremated*

The notification shall be directed to the County Medical Examiner in the county where the death occurred.

Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) § 38-7-104. County Medical Examiner

A County Medical Examiner shall be appointed by the County Mayor, subject to confirmation by the legislative body, based on a recommendation from a convention of physicians resident in the county. A county medical examiner shall be a physician who is either a graduate of an accredited medical school authorized to confer upon graduates the degree of doctor of medicine (M.D.) and who is duly licensed in Tennessee, or is a graduate of a recognized osteopathic college authorized to confer the degree of doctor of osteopathy (D.O.) and who is licensed to practice osteopathic medicine in Tennessee, and shall be elected from a list of a maximum of two (2) doctors of medicine or osteopathy nominated by convention of the physicians, medical or osteopathic, resident in the county, the convention to be called for this purpose by the county mayor.



Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) § 38-7-104. Medico-Legal Death Investigators

A medical investigator shall be a licensed emergency medical technician (EMT), paramedic, registered nurse, physician's assistant or a person registered by or a diplomat of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators and approved by the county medical examiner as qualified to serve as medical investigator.

The county medical investigator may conduct investigations when a death is reported, as provided in § 38-7-108, under the supervision of the county medical examiner. The county medical investigator may make pronouncements of death and may recommend to the county medical examiner that an autopsy be ordered. However, the county medical investigator shall not be empowered to sign a death certificate. The county medical examiner may delegate to the county medical investigator the authority to order an autopsy.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS (N.A.M.E.) ACCREDITATION

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center achieved the distinction of Accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners in May 2010 and has maintained accreditation since that date. The Knox County RFC has an annual review of accreditation standards and has an on-site inspection every 5 years. The National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) is the national professional organization of forensic pathologists, physician medical examiners, medical death investigators, death investigation system administrators, and consultants who perform the official duties of medico-legal investigation of deaths of public interest in the United States. Accreditation is a rigorous process and requires a lengthy inspection by an independent Medical Examiner appointed by the organization. The accreditation requirements are 30 pages long and include more than 360 items covering diverse points of quality, such as how specimens are labeled to the qualifications of staff members.



KNOX COUNTY REGIONAL FORENSIC CENTER 2018 N.A.M.E. DATA

Measure	2018 Number
Deaths in jurisdiction (all deaths including non-ME/C cases):	7,793
Deaths reported to the office:	6,361
Deaths investigated (certified):	6,361
Scenes investigated by ME/C staff:	1,103
Bodies brought to the facility:	1,917
Bodies transported to the facility which were paid for by or transported by the ME/C:	0
Inspections (External Examinations):	850
Autopsies performed in jurisdiction:	450
Autopsies performed for outside jurisdictions:	563
Partial autopsies:	8
Toxicology only:	3
Microscopic studies:	842
Formal neuropathologic studies:	5
Formal cardiac pathologic studies:	1
Deaths certified as homicide:	65
Homicides autopsied:	65
Deaths certified as suicide:	189
Suicides autopsied:	189
Non MVA-Accident deaths certified:	757
Non MVA-Accidents autopsied:	740
MVA Accidental deaths certified:	164
MVA-Accidents autopsied:	164
Deaths certified as natural:	760
Naturals autopsied:	711
Deaths certified as undetermined or unclassified:	45
Undetermined autopsied:	43
Unidentified bodies:	1
Unidentified bodies autopsied:	1
Organ donations:	40
Corneal and other tissue donations:	55
Average number of bodies in storage at the facility per day:	44

Definitions:

1. Jurisdiction = Knox and Anderson counties
2. Non-Jurisdiction = approximately 24 referral counties in Tennessee
3. Full Autopsy: A complete external and internal examination of a decedent
4. Limited Examination: An examination which is focused on a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.
5. External Examination: An examination of the exterior of a decedent.
6. Toxicology Only: Special situation where only toxicology is drawn by MDI



REGIONAL FORENSIC CENTER CASES IN 2018

In 2018, there were 7,793 deaths in Knox and Anderson counties (reported provisional data from Tennessee Vital Statistics). Based on the latest United States Census Bureau data, the approximate population of Knox and Anderson counties is 541,771. The 7,793 deaths thus represent approximately 1.4% of the population. Of these deaths, 6,361 or 81.6% of deaths were reported to the Medical Examiner. Based on analysis of the scene and circumstances of death, and the decedent's medical history, the Regional Forensic Center performed an autopsy or exam on 1,234 (19.4%) of these reported deaths, or in 15.8% of all deaths within the RFC jurisdiction.

Every referral requires a preliminary screening by the RFC medical death investigation staff to determine if the case falls within the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner. There were deaths reported to the Medical Examiner in which jurisdiction was released after investigation. The number of deaths reported to the Regional Forensic Center (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner) is growing each year. With that growth, there is a corresponding increase in the number of autopsies, limited autopsies, and external examinations.

The following data will provide some reference to the progression of growth over the past several years. In addition, it depicts an increase in the number of procedures completed by the Regional Forensic Center. With the increase in the numbers of deaths being reported and the number of procedures being completed, the Regional Forensic Centers budget and staffing have grown to assure that complete, competent service is provided to the citizens of Knox and Anderson counties.

The data represents a mix of jurisdictional cases (Knox and Anderson counties) and non-jurisdictional (24 counties) cases where the Knox County Regional Forensic Center provided autopsy services, consultative services, or fulfilled our role prior to a decedent being cremated.

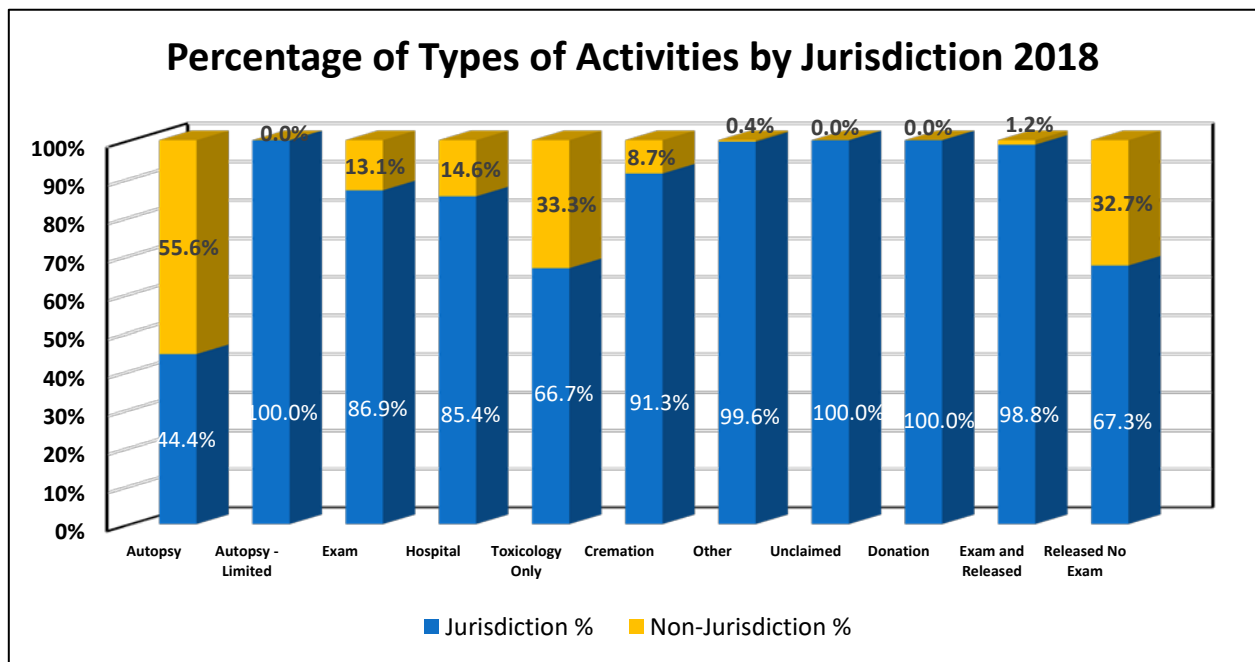


DEATHS REPORTED TO THE RFC in 2018

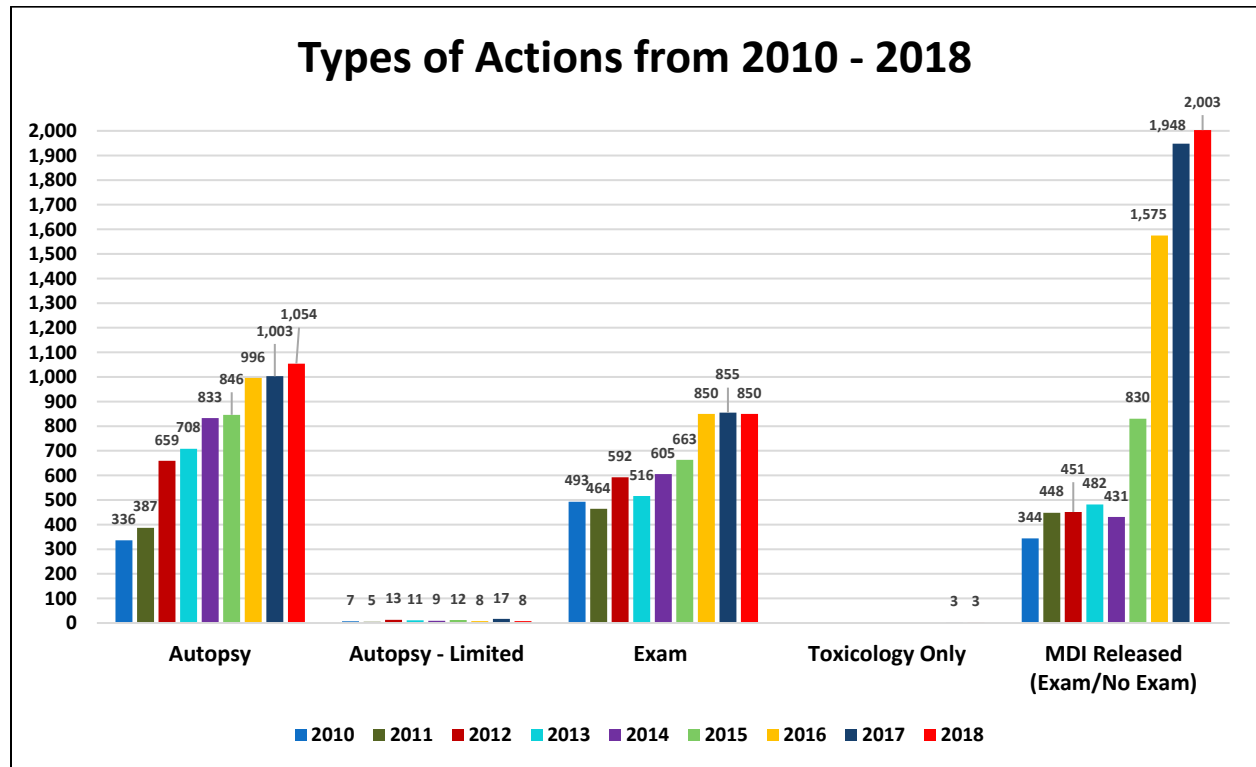
The two charts below depict the amount/percentage and types of cases handled at the RFC during 2018 denoting those within jurisdiction (Knox and Anderson counties) and out of jurisdiction (in 24 counties where the RFC provided autopsy or consultative services).

Types of Activities	Jurisdiction	Out of Jurisdiction	Total
Autopsy	450	563	1,013
Autopsy - Limited	8	0	8
Exam	739	111	850
Hospital/Private	35	6	41
Toxicology Only	2	1	3
Cremation	3,108	296	3,404
Other	1,815	7	1,822
Unclaimed/Public Fiduciary	42	0	42
Donation	13	0	13
Exam and Released	336	4	340
Released No Exam	1,120	543	1,663
	7,668	1,531	9,199

NOTE: A case can have more than one activity.



The chart below depicts the amount and types of some of the activities handled at the RFC over the past 9 years.



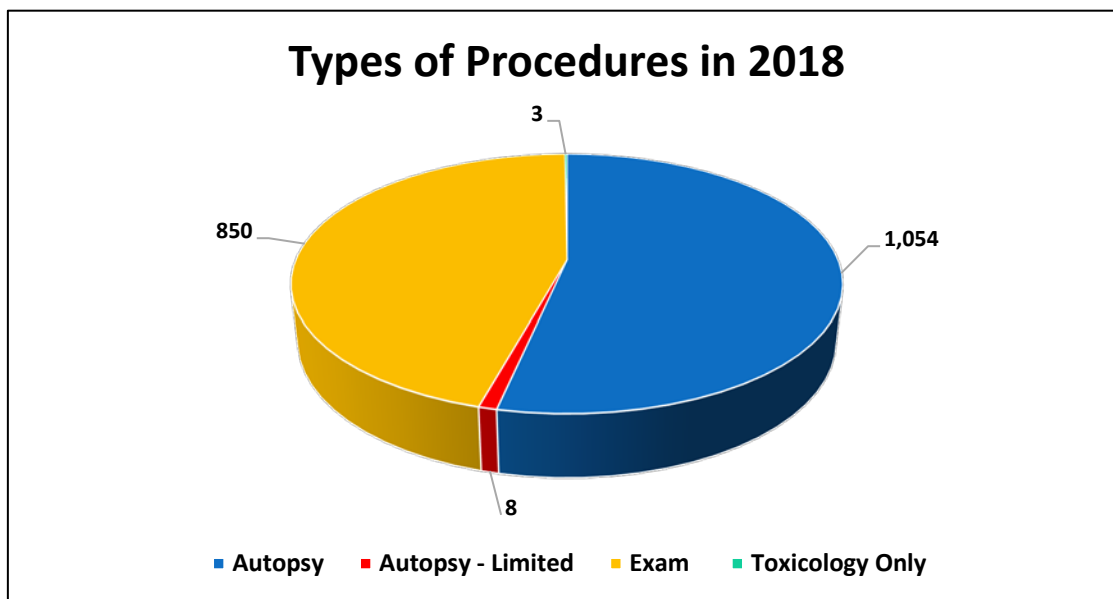
Types of Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Autopsy (1)	336	387	659	708	833	846	996	1,003	1,054
Autopsy - Limited	7	5	13	11	9	12	8	17	8
Exam	493	464	592	516	605	663	850	855	850
Toxicology Only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
MDI Released (Exam/No Exam)	344	448	451	482	431	830	1,575	1,948	2,003
UT Hospital Morgue Ops (2)	606	662	723	740	804	0	0	0	0
	1,786	1,966	2,438	2,457	2,682	2,351	3,429	3,826	3,918

Note: 1. Autopsy numbers include: Medical Examiner cases, Hospital Autopsies, and Private Autopsies.
 2. The RFC stopped running the UT Hospital Morgue operations in 2015.



EXAM TYPES

The Medical Examiners/Pathologists perform autopsies, limited autopsies, external examinations, and special studies at the Regional Forensic Center. The charts below depict the types of procedures completed by the Medical Examiners/Pathologists. In addition, demographics are provided on the autopsies performed.

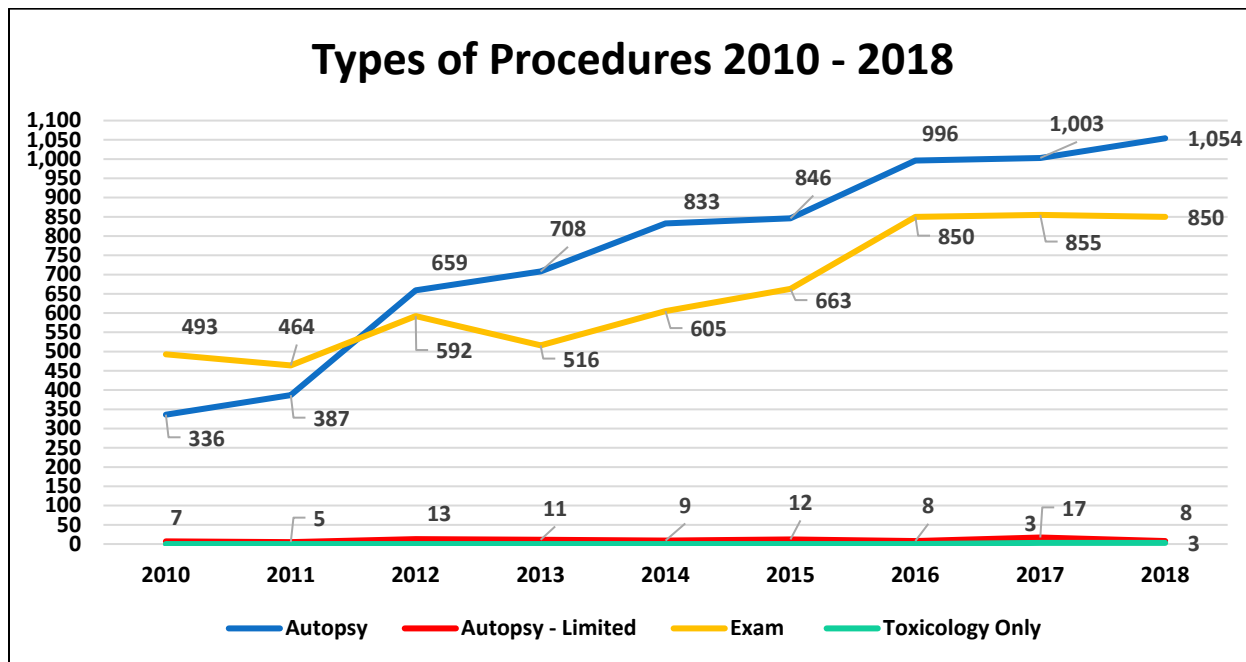


Procedure Type by Jurisdiction

Procedure	Knox	Anderson	Non-Jurisdiction	Total
Autopsy	432	53	569	1,054
Autopsy - Limited	7	1	0	8
Exam	641	98	111	850
Toxicology Only	2	0	1	3
	1,082	152	681	1,915

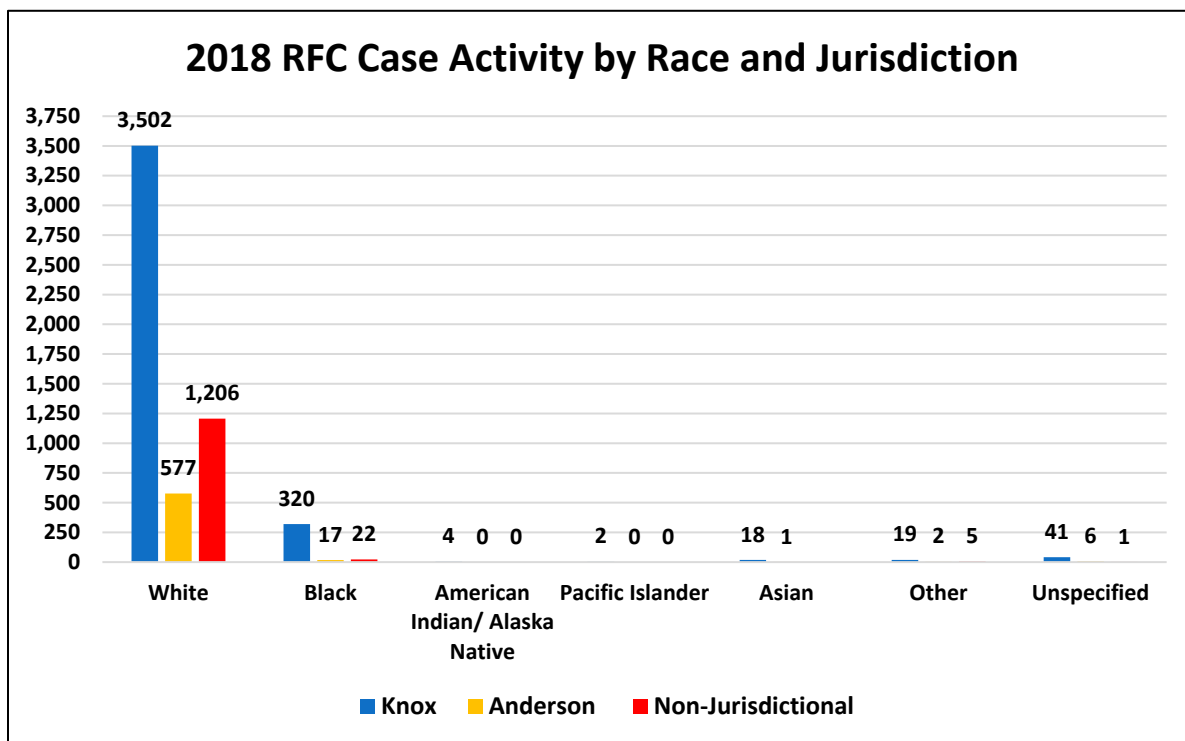
Non-Jurisdiction = rural counties supported by the Knox County Regional Forensic Center

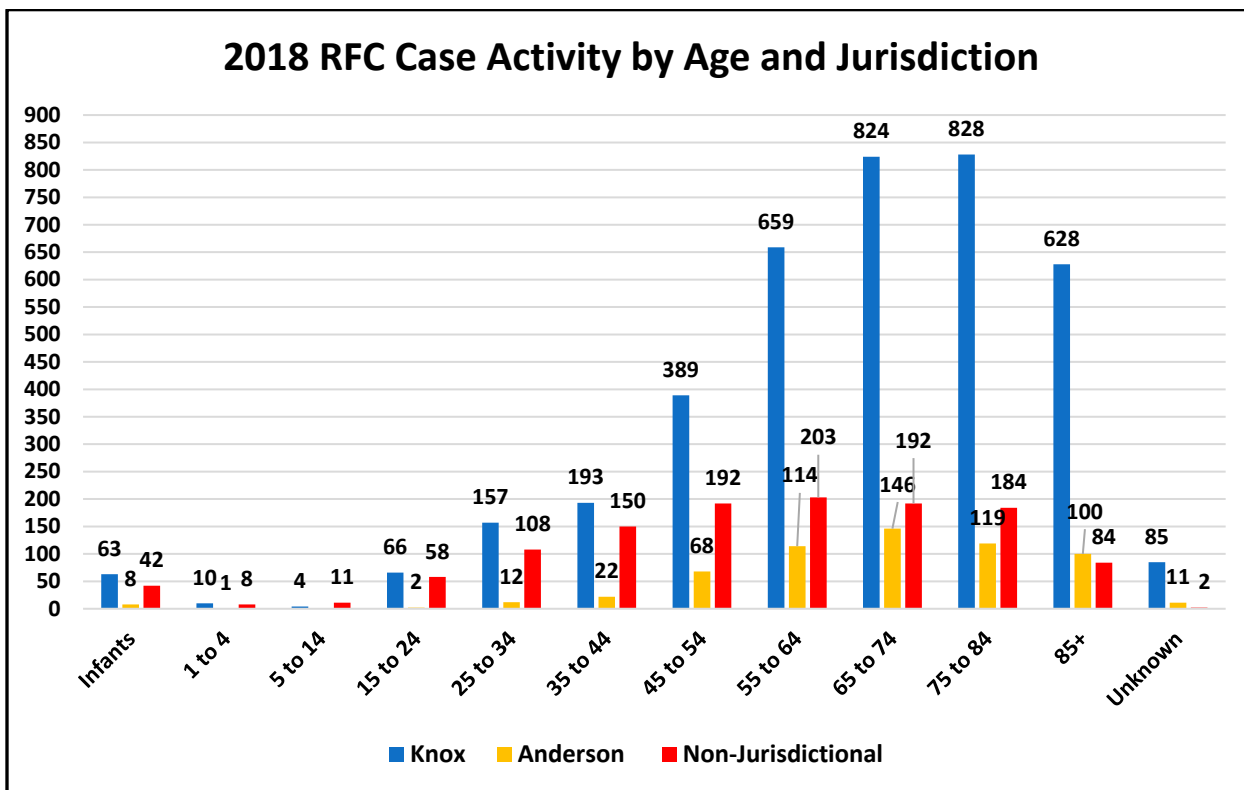
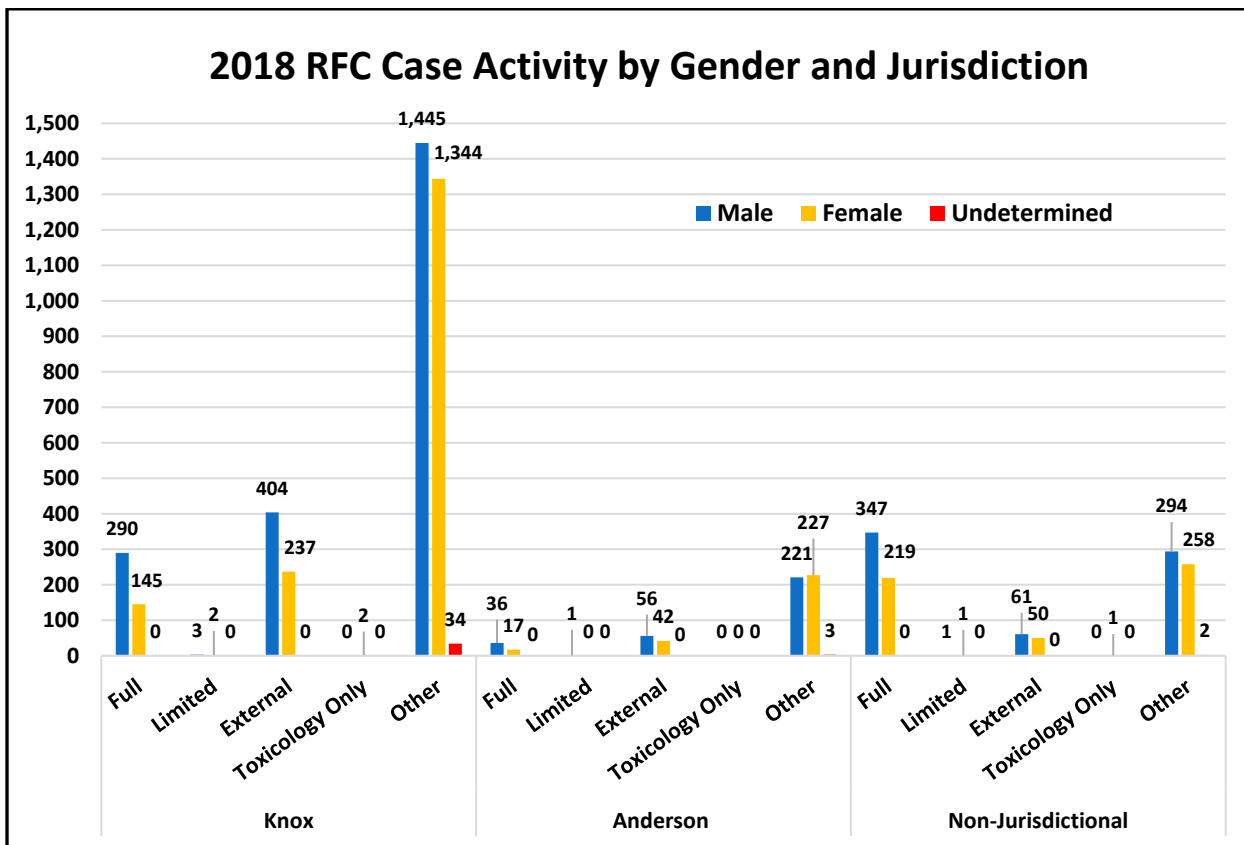




CASE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Regional Forensic Center conducts autopsies, external examinations, scene investigations, cremation permits and other activities. The charts below depict the types gender, age, and race data on the various activities conducted by the RFC. Demographics are not collected on all activities.





MANNER OF DEATH CLASSIFICATION FOR CASES REPORTED TO THE RFC IN 2018

The charts below depict the RFC's Manner of Death classification of cases in 2018. The charts will show data for jurisdictional (Knox and Anderson counties) and non-jurisdictional cases (24 counties).

NOTE: *The Medical Examiner's Office completes the Death Certificate for decedents within our Jurisdiction when the Physician of Record for the decedent refuses to complete the Death Certificate. Because of this action, the total number for the Manner of Death classifications will be higher than the total number autopsied. The Medical Examiner's Office performs this service to assist in bringing closure for the family and assist them in closing out their loved one's affairs.*

Manner of Death Summary for All Counties by Jurisdiction 2018				
Manner of Death	Knox	Anderson	Non- Jurisdiction	Total
Accident MVA	121	7	36	164
Accident - Non MVA	484	50	223	757
Suicide	105	13	71	189
Homicide	39	3	23	65
Natural	516	89	155	760
Undetermined	27	3	15	45
Pending	0	0	1	1
	1,292	165	524	1,981



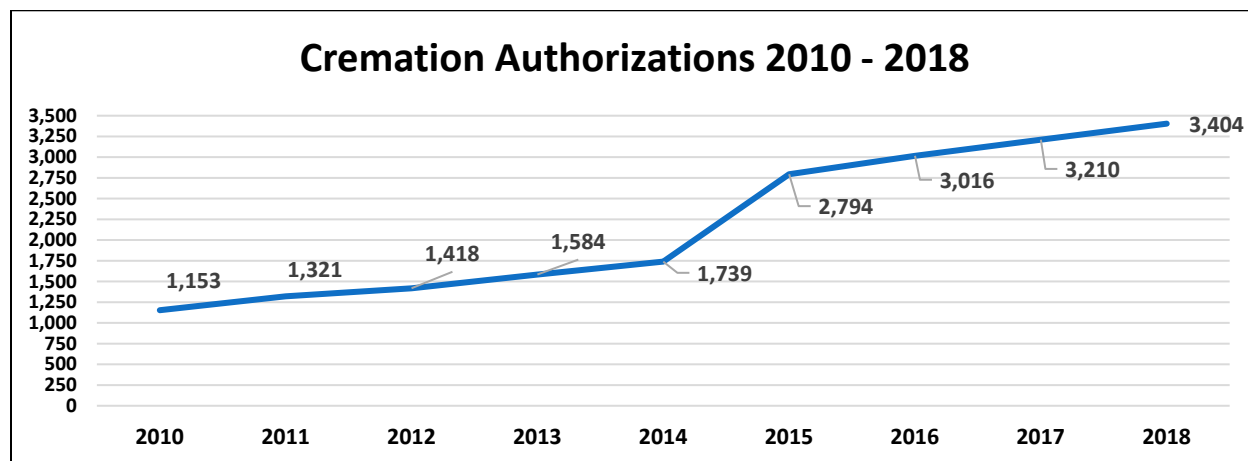
Knox County Regional Forensic Center				
2018 Suicide	Knox	Anderson	Non-Jurisdiction	Total
Hanging	27	3	17	47
Suffocation			1	1
Blount Force	1			1
Drowning		1		1
Gun	55	8	50	113
Overdose	10	1	8	19
Fire			1	1
Hyperthermia-Exogenous	1			1
MVCrash-Driver			1	1
Sharp Instrument	1		2	3
Transportation-Train-Commercial	1			1
Total	96	13	80	189

Knox County Regional Forensic Center				
2018 Undetermined	Knox	Anderson	Non-Jurisdiction	Total
Asphyxia-Positional	1		1	2
Blunt Force	1		2	3
Drowning-Lake			2	2
Drug Death-Acute Intoxication	8		3	11
Fall-From Height	1			1
GI Tract Disease		1		1
Gun-Handgun		1	2	3
Infection	1			1
Neoplasm	1			1
Prematurity		1		1
SIDS/OID-Both	4			4
Undetermined/Other	8		5	13
Total	25	3	15	43



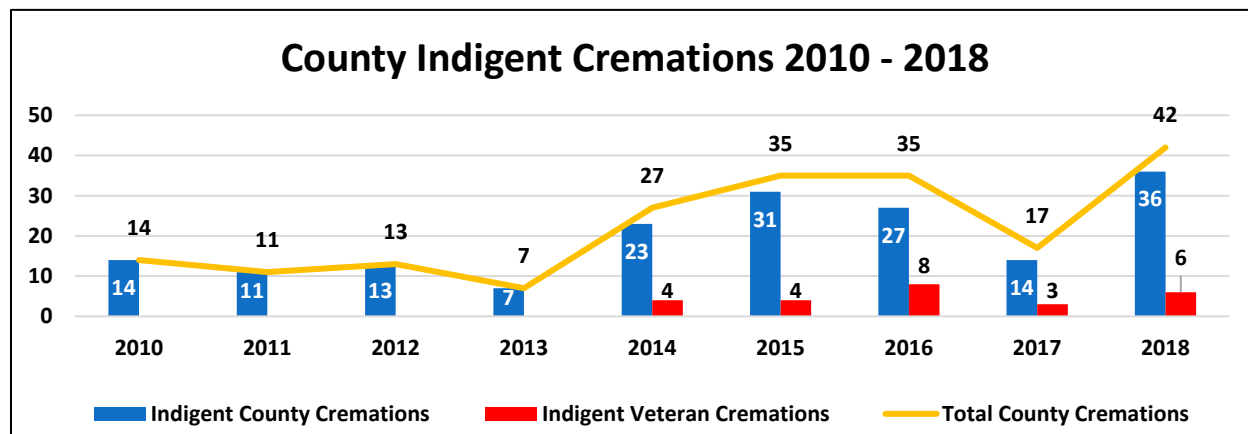
CREMATION AUTHORIZATION IN 2018

The Knox County RFC has statutory responsibility to review and sign cremation authorizations prior to a body being cremated. At the RFC, the cremation authorization form and death certificate of each decedent is reviewed by a RFC Medical Examiner before authorizing a cremation requested by the decedent's family. In 2018, RFC Medical Examiners authorized 3,404 cremations. The following chart demonstrates the number of cremation authorizations signed by our Medical Examiners over the past 9 years.



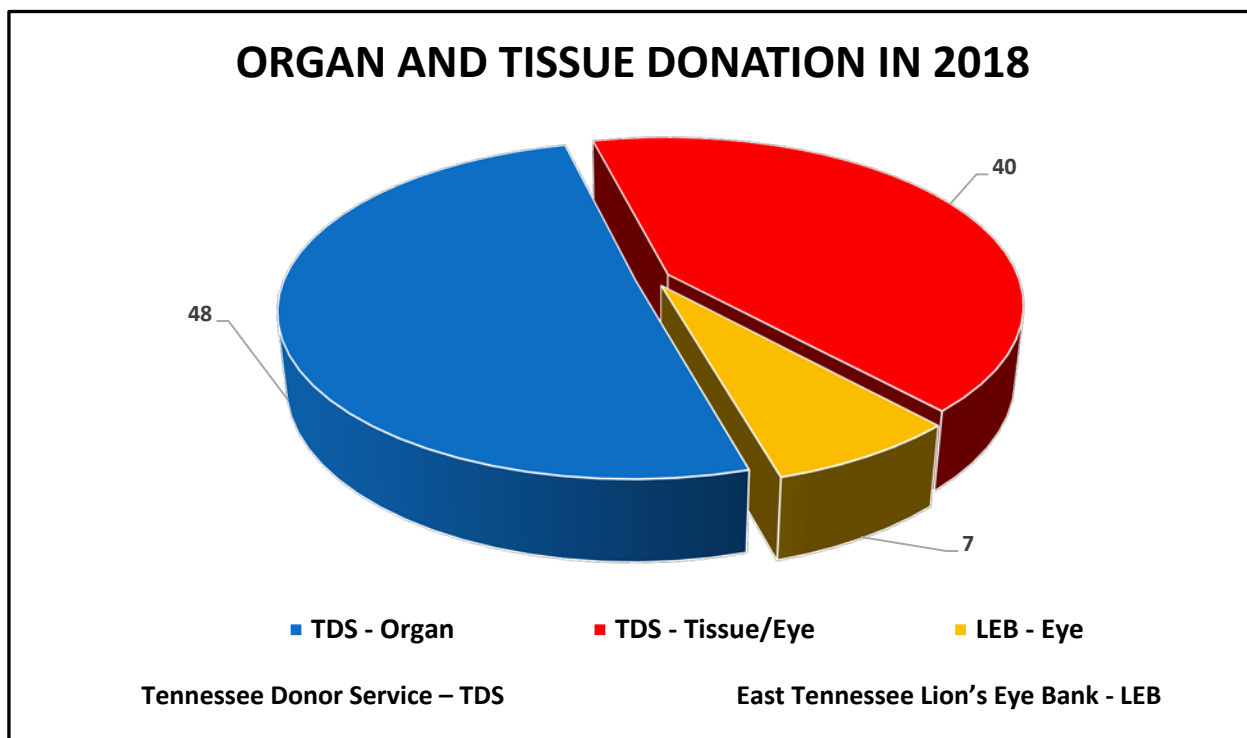
KNOX COUNTY INDIGENT CREMATION IN 2018

When the body of a Medical Examiner case goes unclaimed or remains unidentified, the Knox County RFC will cremate the body and inter the body within Knox County's mausoleum. The RFC only does this for Medical Examiner cases. In addition, the RFC checks for Veteran's status for unclaimed bodies. If the unclaimed body has Veteran status, we work with the local Homeless Veterans Burial Program to provide a proper military burial. The following chart demonstrates the number of indigent cremations at the RFC over the past 9 years.



ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION IN 2018

The Knox County RFC has statutory responsibility to review cases for tissue and organ donation prior to donation to coordinate the medical examiner’s jurisdiction with organ donation groups. The chart below depicts the number of tissue and organ donations in 2018. The data was provided by Tennessee Donor Services and East Tennessee Lion’s Eye Bank representing data from East Tennessee.



NATIONAL MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SYSTEM (NamUs)

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center partners with NamUs to work cases to identify missing and unidentified persons. As part of Tennessee Code Annotated 38-6-1, Regional Forensic Centers are charged with taking control of the unidentified body and coordinating efforts with law enforcement and NamUs to identify the decedent. The RFC serves as a regional resource for counties in East Tennessee who have a need to identify a decedent or assist in finding a missing person.



FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS

The 4 board-certified Forensic Pathologists (Medical Examiners) are responsible for the professional medical investigation and determination of the cause and manner of death handled at the Regional Forensic Center. Our Forensic Pathologists are experts in the evaluation of sudden unexpected natural deaths and unnatural deaths such as deaths from firearms, sharp and blunt force trauma, etc. Forensic Pathologists are frequently called to court to testify on cause of death, and their medical findings and interpretations, particularly in homicide cases. The RFC has consultants in forensic neuropathology, odontology, anthropology, and other disciplines to assist the Forensic Pathologists in evaluating their cases.

In addition to the above responsibilities, Forensic Pathologists (Medical Examiners) are responsible for signing Death Certificates on Regional Forensic Center cases and all Cremation Permits in Knox and Anderson counties. And, they assist with the University of Tennessee's Department of Pathology Resident Graduate Medical Education.

Below are tables depicting the average turn around time for case completion by each physician and case completion rate by days, number of cases, and percentage of cases complete.

2018	AVG TURNAROUND IN DAYS
Dr. Mileusnic	53.2
Dr. Lochmuller	40.2
Dr. Hawes	34.0
Dr. Oliver	21.0
AVG TAT Total	36.7

2018	#	%
Incomplete	1	0%
Cases Over 90 Days	164	9%
Cases Over 60 Days	306	16%
Cases Between 30-60 Days	372	19%
Cases Under 30 Days	1,072	56%
	1,915	100%



MEDICO-LEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

The Medico-legal Death Investigations (MDI) unit has initial responsibility for determining acceptance or declination of jurisdiction for death cases called into the Regional Forensic Center. Once jurisdiction is accepted, there are a variety of activities the MDIs are responsible for to assure proper investigation of the case. The charts below depict the types of actions completed by the MDIs.

On-Scene Investigator Visits	
Investigator	Number
Robin Slattery	151
Ashley Taylor (left)	95
Morgan Maples	184
Amanda Eiriksson	194
Megan Sharpe	187
Lucinda Burnham	0
Christine Hawley	54
Daisy Pishotti (transferred)	175
Kirsten Moffatt (left)	27
James Banning (transferred)	1
Daniella Bassa (transferred)	35
Total	1,103

Case by Disposition Category in 2018						
Case Administration - Investigator	Jurisdiction Declined- Autopsy	Jurisdiction Declined - No Autopsy	Other	Released to Funeral Home	Sent to Autopsy Facility	Total
Robin Slattery, Manager	4	217	178	47	275	721
Ashley Taylor (left)	3	222	110	28	194	557
Morgan Maples	14	273	158	63	344	852
Amanda Eiriksson	4	245	229	53	325	856
Megan Sharpe	6	245	261	59	292	863
Lucinda Burnham			1			1
Christine Hawley	2	59	9	16	90	176
Daisy Pishotti (transferred)	7	288	135	51	267	748
Kirsten Moffatt (left)		57	51	11	27	146
James Banning (transferred)					1	1
Daniella Bassa (transferred)	1	57	16	11	64	149
Total by Disposition	41	1,663	1,148	339	1,879	5,070
% of Total Cases by Disposition	0.81%	32.80%	22.64%	6.69%	37.06%	



AUTOPSY TECHNICIANS

The Autopsy Technician staff has responsibility for receiving/releasing decedents from the RFC; coordinating anthropology, x-ray, lab testing, and other activities for the decedent, and assisting the Forensic Pathologists conducting autopsies/external examinations. They work with funeral homes to transition the decedent for their final disposition. The charts below depict the types of actions completed by the Autopsy Technicians.

The chart below illustrates how quickly an autopsy or external examination was completed once the decedent arrived at the Regional Forensic Center. This allows the RFC to quickly release the decedent to the funeral home for final disposition.

2018 Days and Percentage of Cases Where an Autopsy/Exam was Performed from Time of Arrival at RFC		
Within 24 Hours	1615	84.3%
Within 48 Hours	1837	95.9%
Within 72 Hours	1867	97.5%
Within 96 Hours	1872	97.8%
Within 120 Hours	1915	100.0%

The chart below shows how many toxicology tests were performed at the Regional Forensic Center and where they went for testing.

2018 Toxicology Locations		
Location Sent	Number	%
TBI	49	3.04%
LabCorp	5	0.31%
NMS	1557	96.65%
	1611	



FORENSIC CLERKS

The Forensic Clerk staff has responsibility for coordinating Forensic Pathologists schedules for depositions and court testimony, billing, death certification finalization, open records requests, assuring proper case closure, coordinate indigent interment, and other activities. They work with funeral homes, law enforcement, District Attorneys, lawyers, families, and others to assure requested information is provided in a timely fashion. The charts below depict the types of actions completed by the Forensic Clerks.

The Forensic Clerks filled 1,223 open records and subpoenaed records requests in 2018. By providing this information to family, law enforcement, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, lawyers, insurance companies, and others, it provides closure for families and answers questions for the other groups.

Forensic Pathologists complete Death Certificates for Knox and Anderson county cases performed at the Regional Forensic Center. At the request of the County Medical Examiner, they will complete the Death Certificates on certain cases sent from other counties to the Regional Forensic Center. In addition, when physicians in Knox and Anderson county refuse to sign the Death Certificates on their patients, the Forensic Pathologists will complete Death Certificates for those cases to assure the final act of a physician is completed for the deceased and family. Forensic Clerks are responsible for coordinating proper Death Certificate actions between the State of Tennessee Department of Vital Records, Funeral Homes, and the Regional Forensic Center. In 2018, the Forensic Clerks coordinated the completion of 1,941 Death Certificates at the Regional Forensic Center.



DRUG RELATED DEATH REPORT

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center produces a yearly Drug Related Death Report for Knox and Anderson Counties. Although we serve over 25 counties in East Tennessee, the report focuses on Knox and Anderson Counties because Dr. Mileusnic is the Chief Medical Examiner for those counties. Because she is the Chief Medical Examiner for those counties, we can assure a thorough investigation and have a greater confidence that possible drug overdose deaths have been to the Regional Forensic Center for an autopsy or exam.

The Drug Related Death Report provides data on the number of drug deaths, demographics about the decedents, location of injury and death, drugs involved, emerging drug trends, etc. The report is updated yearly and provides a longitudinal picture of drug deaths in Knox and Anderson Counties.

For a copy of the report, go to the Knox County Regional Forensic Centers website at <https://knoxcounty.org/rfc/reports.php>.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OF THE RFC IN 2018

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center regularly interacts with, and impacts, the local community in a variety of ways. Such activities have recently included:

We provided lectures on a college level to Roane State Community College paramedic students, nursing students, and University of Tennessee residents and students. In addition, we have hosted numerous high schools and home-school groups at the RFC to instruct them on our operations and provide a tour of the facility.

We provide educational conferences on medico-legal death investigation to regional medical examiners, medico-legal death investigators, law enforcement personnel, emergency response personnel, and others involved in death investigation.

The RFC hosts several conferences a year in conjunction with the National Forensics Academy. The conferences are focused on providing training to law enforcement on death scene investigation, autopsy techniques, and fingerprinting decedents.

Staff members of the RFC serve on the Knox County Child/Infant Fatality Death Review Team, Anderson County Child/Infant Fatality Death Review Team, Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response Committee, Metro Drug Coalition, consult with East Tennessee county Child/Infant Fatality Death Review Teams, and the Tennessee State Medical Examiner Advisory Council.

We provide lectures about RFC operations and the death investigation process to groups such as: Knox County Emergency Management Agency, Funeral Home Directors groups, community groups, and others.

Staff members participate on committees with multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies in our community focused on emergency preparedness, community development, etc. These committees are comprised of people from hospitals, emergency response agencies, funeral homes, public health, multiple universities, and other community groups. The RFC tries to assure our staff are integrated into the communities we serve to develop and foster relationships.

We participate in the Knox/East Tennessee Healthcare Coalition which is a coalition of 17 counties in East Tennessee made up of hospitals, emergency management agencies, public health, and other healthcare organizations. The coalition works together to address emergency management, medical management, and healthcare planning within the 17-county region. The coalition holds tabletop and full-scale emergency preparedness exercises, various training opportunities, and works together to seek grant opportunities for funding of the region's and organizational needs.



One of our most important community interactions happens when physicians and hospitals receive post-mortem reports and gain insight on a disease or injury process. Our Medical Examiner/Pathologists are available for consult with local physicians and hospitals as needed.

The RFC participates in a joint effort with the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) to identify unidentified cases in East Tennessee.

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center hosts pathology residents from the University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine and forensic dentistry residents from the Department of General Dentistry's Forensic Odontology program in the Graduate School of Medicine at the University of Tennessee. In addition, we host graduate students and PhD candidates from the University of Tennessee's Forensic Anthropology program. We host medical students and Master of Science students from Lincoln Memorial University.

The RFC partners with the Office of the District Attorney – 6th Judicial District – Knox County, Knoxville Police Department, Knox County Sheriff's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Appalachia High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area as part of the Knox County Drug Overdose Task Force. The force formed out of a desire to address the growing drug issue and drug deaths in Knox County. Our goals are relatively simple:

1. Identify prosecutable street level sources of illegal opiates and other drugs.
2. Identify strategies to lower drug related deaths, overdoses, and arrests.
3. Develop best practices and a uniform data collection tool for local and regional use.
4. Develop a drug related death data reference resource for medical and service professionals.
5. Create a confidential and secure system (behind the DRDTF firewall) to collect law enforcement and medically sensitive information. Quantify and analyze the data to provide de-identified reports and data for collaboration with community partner agencies.

The RFC has partnered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and their DEA360 program. The partnership focuses on coordinating education and community action for drug issues in Knox County. The RFC also provides data related to drug deaths in Knox and Anderson counties to the DEA.





The Knox County Regional Forensic Center is Accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME).

To discuss this report, please contact Mr. John Lott, Senior Director, at the Knox County Regional Forensic Center. Mr. Lott is the preparer of the report.

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