

## Chapter

# 2

## Minimum Facilities Required at Postmortem Centers

Mortuary complex is a very important area in the hospital premises and all classes of society visit this area that too in groups. This area is another face of hospital so care should be taken that public or visitors carry good impression about it. This area should have general ambient surrounding, office, enquiry counter, doctors room, staff room, store, cold storage, specimen storage, cloth drying room, public viewing of deceased, dissection area for normal autopsy, dissection room for infectious and decomposed bodies, organ retrieval/evidence preservation, photographer room and observation area for students.

### AUDIT SHEET FOR MINIMUM FACILITIES REQUIRED AT POSTMORTEM CENTER

Items to be checked	Yes	No
Building infrastructure		
Autopsy room		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One room at primary level</li> <li>• Two rooms at district level</li> <li>• Minimum three rooms at tertiary level:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Normal room for routine cases</li> <li>2. Separate room for decomposed cases</li> <li>3. One clean room for organ retrieval</li> </ol> </li> </ul>		
<b>Autopsy tables</b>		
Primary level (1), district level (2), medical college (3). One table can be made		
<b>evidence collection table</b> (putting white cotton or plastic sheet) on dried and clean table.		
<b>Evidence collection table</b> (clean table without running water and may have a fixed camera)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper lighting, ideal is shadowless fluorescent tubes are required</li> <li>• Put a white plastic sheet over the table</li> <li>• Transfer the body to this table over the sheet</li> <li>• Collect evidence</li> <li>• Sampling</li> <li>• Swabs</li> <li>• Smears</li> <li>• Photography of original condition, with clothing and without clothing</li> <li>• Taking off clothing, description and examination</li> </ul>		

## Report Dispatch Timings

### Expected Timings for Releasing Different Medicolegal Reports

Report	Duration	Reasons for delay	Impact
1. Postmortem certificate	Immediate along with body	No excuse	It is required for burial and transportation of body
2. Postmortem report	Immediate or maximum 2 days if holiday comes in between or late hour post-mortem is there or there are multiple stab or firearm injuries are there which require time to write down	1. No reason is appreciated 2. Objective findings should be released then and there along with the body	Delay is not appreciated, it matters in some cases and gives scope for speculation and question about integrity of person.
3. Postmortem report after viscera analysis in poisoning cases	Within one week after getting viscera analysis report	FSL report is late	In some cases viscera analysis report is just a formality
4. Postmortem report after histo-pathology examination	2–3 weeks is reasonable period	HP sampling and preparation. Once work load is less then machine is usually run once or twice in a month.	More than one month delay is not appreciated
5. Postmortem report with brain HP examination	6–8 weeks	Brain fixation takes little more time and examining slides is also time consuming	2 months is reasonable period but should not be delayed more than 3 months by all standards
6. Postmortem awaiting clinical records	Within 7 days after getting records	Some times record is not available immediately due to holiday, different hospital or inter-state case	When long hospitalization and surgical intervention are there then giving report without studying clinical/hospital record may give wrong diagnosis and opinion

Contd.

**Educational visits to places before forensic practice are:**

Place	Purpose	Duration
Forensic Science Laboratory – Toxicology division	To know about sampling Requirement and functioning of laboratory Effect of faulty and improper handling and preservation of viscera	1 day–2 hours
Biological division DNA profiling	To know sampling Chain of custody Marking priority swabs Effect of contamination and improper preservation	1 day – 2 hours
Ballistic division	To see firearm testing Types of firearm Sample handling and preservation	1 day – 2 hours
Police station	To know working DD entry FIR system Limitation	1 day – one hour
Jail	To see the cell for restraining people To see cell condition of people Possible causes of accidents and mishaps Meaning of liberty Impact of your wrong judgment	1 day – 2 hours
Mental asylum	As to know condition Identify mental illness and its impact Tolerance power	1 day – 2 hours
Court	To see justice system and its cost Timing Method of working	1 day – 2–4 hours

**SOCIAL FORENSIC MESSAGE**

Orientation and brushing up knowledge and skills are always good for a professional.

**Near by items—example**

Bedsheet/bed cover/quilt/shawl/blanket/saree/duppata/belt/string/rope/towel, etc.

Visible wounds

Blood—location, color, direction, size, thickness, dry/wet, spatter and shape

Digital camera has replaced sketches. By chance camera is not available then sketches are best and simple way of recording findings.

Photographs of genitalia of victim should be reserved for medical viewing only. Ordinarily these should not be given to police or court until unless particularly asked. For genital areas, sketches are best form of communication.

**Example—crime scene evaluation when a person is found dead on the spot.**

Check points	Yes	No	Indeterminate
Who is the person?			
When he died?			
How he died?			
Anyone else involved?			
Who located?			
Single death or group involved			
What time incident happened?			
When last seen alive?			
Is it home/road/indoor/outdoor/guest/farm house, etc.?			
Scene photographs			
Weather—clear/cloudy/foggy/hot/humid/rainy/cold			
Raining—hard/moderate/light/drizzling			
Vegetation			
Rigor mortis absent/mild/strong /well established			
Is Rigor mortis consistent with original position?			
Postmortem staining—absent/anterior/posterior/sides/limbs			
Is PM staining blanchable on pressure?			
Is PM staining consistent with position?			
What is the color of PM staining?			
Natural orifices			
Mouth—foam/food/saliva/mucus/blood /cloth/others			
Nose—mucus/food/foam/blood/others			
Ears—bleeding			
Anus—soiled with blood/feces/foreign body/lubricant, if found naked			
Genital organs, if found naked			
Describe injuries over exposed parts			
Items and their relation with body			
Resuscitation by family/friends/attendant—pinching/slapping/shaking/			
holding arms/push on chest/mouth to mouth breathing/chest pumping			
Medical support team—mouth to mouth breathing/face mask breathing/			
intubation/oxygen/chest compression/IV line			
Hospital—IV line/face mask breathing/ambu bag pressure breathing/			
intubation/chest cardiac massage			
Clothing—clean/soiled			
Blood/vomit/mud/grit/			
Cut/hole/tear/wrinkling/fresh de-stitching			
Buttons—loose/detached			
Appropriate to weather and location			
Any natural disease record			
Medication, if taken, details			
Time since last meal			
Time since last seen alive			