

Document #:	Department: Operations
Policy Title: COVID-19 Local Health Emergency Policy	
Effective Date: 03/20/2020	Revision Number: v1.0
Standard References:	

Policy:

The Boulder County Coroner's Office has adopted the Boulder County Local Health Emergency Policy established on 03/13/2020 due to the recent outbreak of COVID-19.

Since the majority of COVID-19 infections are due to respiratory droplets from one living person to the next during coughing, sneezing, or mucus transfer, the risk of infection during death investigation and autopsy is low. However, BCCO is currently under special orders to further reduce potential infection. All personnel are to review complete procedures in the CDC document Interim Guidance for Collection and Submission of Postmortem Specimens from Deceased Persons Under Investigation for COVID-19 February 2020.

In order to prevent infection of BCCO employees and potential visitors in the likely event of COVID-19 related deaths and subsequent autopsies, BCCO is immediately enacting the following additional policies until further notice:

- Only individuals essential to the BCCO mission are granted access to the building (Law Enforcement, DA's, Coroner's, Facilities and IT).
- All tours, visitors, presentations, trainings, and non-essential meetings will be postponed until further notice.
- Entry into the building requires handwashing prior to passing beyond the front lobby.
- All BCCO personnel are responsible for monitoring their personal health and immediately reporting to supervisor if any symptoms arise and immediately isolate themselves from co-workers, the public, and family.
 - Individuals who have a cough, fever, runny nose or any other cold or flu-like symptoms will be restricted from accessing the building until COVID-19 infection has been ruled out, or they have been fever free for over 24 hours without the use of medications.
- All response vehicles and investigator war bags shall include ample supply of PPE listed in the COVID-19 Local Health Emergency Procedure under Tier 1.
- All procedural changes for scene investigations, body examinations, specimen collection and specimen submission are effective immediately until further notice.

Purpose:

Our utmost priority is BCCO employee health and safety. This policy was developed to address unattended deaths in Boulder County of individuals reportedly experiencing "flu-like symptoms" during this current emerging novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This policy is based on current CDC guidelines and will outline policy changes effective immediately. These changes will provide the safest working conditions possible as we continue to deal with the evolving threat of COVID-19. This policy is based on the most current information available at the time of its writing, and while it is

intended to keep all involved people safe including the community at large, there are many unknowns about this emerging pandemic. This document is subject to change as new information becomes available. Changes to this policy will be updated and released as needed.

BCCO will be triaging unattended deaths with “flu-like” symptoms prior to responding to the death scene. They will be categorized into four tiers. Please see the definitions below. Each tier will have specific procedures for BCCO personnel.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Boulder County Coroner’s Office staff.

Responsibility:

All Employees are responsible for reading and understanding all new policy and procedures enacted during a local health emergency.

Definitions:

- COVID-19: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS-Co V, SARS-Co V, and now with SARS-Co V-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Most often, spread from a living person happens with close contact (i.e., within about 6 feet) via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. This route of transmission is not a concern when handling human remains or performing postmortem procedures.
- Tier 1: Unattended deaths with potential COVID-19 infection (rule out COVID-19)
- Tier 2: Unattended death with general “flu-like symptoms” / low risk for COVID-19
- Tier 3: Unattended death without information on cause of death
- Tier 4: Unattended death with very limited or no risk for COVID-19 infection

Related Documents:

- BOCO Local Public Health Emergency Policy (03/13/2020)
- CDC Interim Guidance for Collection and Submission of Postmortem Specimens from Deceased Persons Under Investigation for COVID-19 February 2020

Related Procedures:

COVID-19 Local Health Emergency Procedure