

**YOUR RIGHTS**

# **FORENSIC INSTITUTE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES**



**POLICE  
HEADQUARTERS**



**ÉDITION 11/2017**

# THE INSTITUT MÉDICO-LÉGAL (IML)

of Paris receives the bodies of deceased persons in the following cases

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- death on public highways, whether accidental or not ;
- death considered to be criminal or suspicious ;
- unidentified body ;
- body transported with public health measures.

**When the person has been identified and the cause of death is not considered to be suspicious, the body is kept at the Institut Médico-Légal until the funeral.**

**When the cause of death is criminal or suspicious, legal proceedings are commenced. Depending on the outcome of the preliminary inquiry, an autopsy may be requested by the court. The body may not leave the Institut Médico-Légal until the burial permit has been issued by the investigating magistrate.**

**When the civil status of the person is not known, all possible steps are taken to identify him or her : identification by the relatives in the presence of the investigators, medical investigations, etc.**

**Bodies are always kept in cold chambers throughout their stay at the Institut Médico-Légal.**

## WHAT IS AN AUTOPSY?

An autopsy is an examination performed by an expert forensic pathologist at the request of the legal authorities. An external and internal examination of the body is performed to find out the causes of death. In some cases additional examinations will be necessary : radiological examination, microscopic examination of the various organs, toxicological examination, biological tests, forensic examination, etc. The samples taken are sealed and kept at the Institut Médico-Légal for as long as necessary.

## IN WHICH CASES WILL AN AUTOPSY BE REQUESTED BY THE COURTS?

Autopsies are routinely performed in cases of criminal death or suspicious death. It

may also be requested to search for the causes of death, to determine whether it is natural or not and to specify any possible causal links to an illness, an accident or a crime.

## CAN YOU RECEIVE THE RESULTS OF THE AUTOPSY?

After the autopsy, the medical examiner writes a report and gives it to the magistrate who requested it. The family can obtain the conclusions of this report by contacting the magistrate directly. The medical examiner is not authorized to provide this information.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CLOTHES AND VALUABLES?

The clothes worn by the deceased person on his or her arrival at the Institut Médico-Légal may be handed over to the family,

except when the legal proceedings require they be sealed. They may also be destroyed for hygienic reasons when necessary. If the family wishes to provide clothing to dress the body before it is placed in the coffin, it must be left at the reception of the IML 24 hours before it leaves. The valuables found on the body are returned to the Police Department in charge of the investigation or placed sealed and deposited with the Clerk of the competent Court (Office of returns), where they will be handed over to the family.

## PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONATED THEIR BODIES TO SCIENCE

These bodies are transported to the Faculty of Medicine to which donation has been made. Transport between the Institut Médico-Légal and the faculty is the responsibility of the family. Transport of the body must be declared beforehand, by any written method, to the Mayor of the Commune of the place of death or delivery.

## HOW MAY BODIES BE TRANSPORTED FROM IML?

- **By funeral directors** who can also take charge of administrative procedures, regardless of the place of burial.
- **By the family itself**, which can take care of all the administrative procedures. Bodies in coffins may only be transported in authorised vehicles.

➤ **The choice of funeral director is made by the family**, as is the method of burial. The Institut Médico-Légal can comply with the rites associated with all religious denominations. Funeral rites may be performed by religious officials holding a permit issued by the prefecture of Police.

➤ **The family will be asked** to pay storage and casketing fees by the Institut Médico-Légal.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE FAMILIES OR THE FUNERAL OPERATOR

➤ **Collect the burial permit from the Institut Médico-Légal** : pay the fee for storage of the body and the costs for placing it in a coffin.

➤ **Go to the Town Hall of the municipality in which the death occurred** apply for an authorisation to close the coffin in duplicate, which will be issued on presentation of the burial permit. A death certificate may also be given to you.

➤ **If the body is buried in France, but not in a Paris cemetery**, the body transportation declaration must be filed with this Department. If the body is to be cremated, the Cremation Permit will be issued to you as well. If the burial is abroad or outside Metropolitan France, the body transportation declaration must be sent in advance to the mortuary operations section of the prefecture de Police (*12 quai de*



Gesvres - 75004 Paris - M° Châtelet)

- **Closing and sealing the coffin** are carried out under the responsibility of the funeral director and in the presence of a member of the family. If these conditions are not met, the operations are subject to police monitoring at a fee of € 20. The fee will be recorded by the Civil Status Office of the Town Hall on the coffin closure permit. To call the police, you need to go with the

date and time of departure from the Institut Médico-Légal and a copy of the declaration stamped or the signed authorisation to: the district Police Station, **80, avenue Daumesnil M° Gare de Lyon.**

- **The day prior to the departure**, you need to present the IML secretarial office with the payment slip issued to you to carry out all the procedures.



## USEFUL ADDRESSES AND OPENING TIMES

- Town Hall of the 12th Arrondissement  
Monday to Friday 8.30 - 17.00 and  
Saturdays 9.00 - 12.00.  
**130, avenue Daumesnil 75012 Paris**  
Ⓜ **Dugommier ou Montgallet (Metro stops)**
- Mortuary Operations Centre at the  
Prefecture of Police  
Monday - Thursday 9.00 - 12.00  
and 14.00 - 16.30. Fridays 9.00 -  
12.00 and 14.00 - 16.15.  
**12, quai de Gesvres 75004 Paris**  
ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ **Châtelet (Metro stop)**
- Fifteen - twenty Police Unit  
Monday - Friday 9.00 - 20.00 conti-  
nuously. Service on Saturdays and  
Sundays.  
**80, avenue Daumesnil 75012 Paris**  
ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ **Gare de Lyon (Metro stop)**
- Funeral Directors  
The list of funeral directors registe-  
red with the Prefecture de Police is  
available online on the  
[www.prefecturedepolice.paris](http://www.prefecturedepolice.paris) website  
(private persons/other procedures/oper-  
ations mortuaries/authorised operators)
- Institut médico-légal de Paris  
**2, place Mazas 75012 Paris**  
tél : 01 44 75 47 00  
fax : 01 44 75 47 15 ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ **Gare**  
**de Lyon** • ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ **Gare d'Austerlitz**  
Ⓜ **Quai de la Râpée (Metro stop)**

## FOR FAMILIES ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- Monday - Thursday 9.00 - 12.00 and  
14.00 - 16.30, Fridays 9.00 to 17.45.  
Saturdays 9.00 - 17.00. Closed on  
Sundays and public holidays.
- Telephone information 24/7  
on 01 44 75 47 00

## VIEWING VISITS

- Monday - Friday 9.30 - 11.00 and  
14.30 - 17.00.
- Saturday from 9.30 - 11.00 and 14.30  
- 16.30.

## **Make life easier, get information before you travel**

To obtain information or find out the address of the nearest  
reception point to you  
(Paris, Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne)

**your administrative  
procedures**

**assistance**

**about us**

[www.prefecturedepolice.paris](http://www.prefecturedepolice.paris)

**3430**

**Service 0,06 € / min  
+ price of a call**

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