

The Role of the Coroner in SIDS

The Coroner is an independent official with responsibility under law for the medico-legal investigation of certain deaths. A Coroner must inquire into the circumstances of sudden unexpected deaths. This requires a coroner's post-mortem examination.

A sudden unexpected death of an infant must be reported to the coroner. In the cases of sudden death there is a legal responsibility on the doctor, registrar of deaths, funeral undertaker, householder and every person in charge of any institution or premises in which the deceased person was residing at the time of his/her death to report such a death to the coroner. The death will be reported to a member of the Garda who will then inform the coroner.

The coroner will arrange for a coroner's post-mortem examination to be carried out. Following the confirmation of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome as the cause of death after the post-mortem examination, the coroner will issue a certificate so that the death of that person may be registered.

The Garda Siochana assists the coroner in arranging a formal identification of the deceased by a member of the family, or a relative of the deceased. The Garda will send a report to the coroner on the circumstances preceding the death. The fact that relatives may be met at the hospital by a uniformed Garda or that a Garda may call to the home to take a statement, does not mean that the death is regarded as suspicious. The Garda is acting on behalf of the Coroner.

The post-mortem (medical) examination is a procedure to establish the cause of death. It may take from six to eight weeks or longer before a post-mortem report from the pathologist is received at the coroner's office. The coroner's certificate will be issued to the Registrar of Births and Deaths who will proceed to register the death. The Registrar will then issue the Death Certificate. Death must be registered with the Registrar of Births and Deaths for the registration district in which the death occurs. The death cannot be registered until the full post-mortem report is received.

For more information visit this website:
Dublin City Coroner www.coronerdublincity.ie