



INDIANA STATE CORONERS TRAINING BOARD

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To: Adam Horst, Director
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From: Lisa K. Barker, MDI
Executive Administrative Director

Subject: FY2012-2013 Biennium Agency Overview

The Indiana State Coroner's Training Board (CTB) was established by the Indiana General Assembly in 1994. The CTB was created to establish a certification training course and continuing education course for coroners and their deputies. The CTB was established at the request of coroners throughout Indiana to provide more professionalism to the office and to make sure all death investigations collectively were conducted in a uniform manner. The CTB is made up of six persons: the Indiana State Health Commissioner (or designee), the Superintendent of the Indiana State Police (or designee) and four elected coroners appointed by the Governor. The CTB has two employees, the Executive Administrative Director and the Director of Training. The two of them oversee the daily business of the board and also conduct the certification trainings and in-service trainings. The CTB then contracts with a private company to oversee the testing and testing results.

Under I.C. 36-2-14-22.3, the Indiana State Coroner's Training Board is charged with creating certification training and in-service training for all elected and appointed coroners and their deputies. Specifically, a minimum 40 hour certification training course must be established with specific guidelines regarding instruction material and qualification of instructors. This course must be completed and a certification obtained within a prescribed time frame in order to meet the requirements of this statute. Furthermore, the board must provide at least 8 hours of in-service training per year for those affected by this statute.

Between 1994 and 1997, the CTB worked to create a curriculum and a certification test. The curriculum that was designed to meet national standards for death investigators and the test was designed based on the curriculum. The test was then validated by utilizing death investigators from around the country; those same persons were used as instructors in the beginning to conduct the training. After the core curriculum and test were created,

the CTB added two sections to both, the first being a section on Indiana Law as it pertains to the coroner and the second being an externship program.

These minimum standards were then adopted by the CTB and in 1998 training and testing started throughout the state. In October 2000, IAC 207 was adopted by the CTB; this administrative rule made the certification training and testing mandatory for the deputy coroners. Even though the training was at that time only required for deputy coroners, the elected coroners were encouraged to attend the training and, prior to 2007, 68 coroners had taken the certification training, externship and test, thus completing their certification. The training and certification process as a whole has been welcomed with open arms and optimism by the coroners and their deputies. The CTB felt strongly enough about the standardization of the training and the way death investigations are conducted that it elected not to “grandfather” anyone for this certification.

The CTB currently hosts 2 certification training classes per year and provides in-service training to maintain the Medicolegal Death Investigator Certification. The Board utilizes instructors from around the state to teach the classes during the certification training. These instructors consist of a forensic pathologist, a forensic pediatrician, a nurse, law enforcement, an attorney and persons who are experienced in the coroner system and who are Certified Medicolegal Death Investigators

In 2007, the Indiana General Assembly passed into law the requirement for the elected coroner to become certified and provided 6 months from the time of taking office to complete this certification. The CTB was supportive of this legislation.

The CTB uses its funds to conduct mandated and in-service trainings for continuing education. The funds are used to provide materials for the trainings, housing for the students, salaries of contractual employees, salaries of instructors used in the training, and related office expenses.

I.C. 36-2-14-23 requires each elected or appointed coroner and their deputies to complete these courses. Since the majority of the coroners and their deputies are “part-time” (only 4 counties have full-time staff), the process of obtaining their required in-service training (continuing education) is very difficult. The Indiana State Coroner’s Training Board holds a continuing education training conference every year in June to allow coroners and deputy coroners to receive in-service training and meet the requirements set forth by law. Because of the difficulty for these professionals to get continuing education throughout the year in their respective counties, attendance at this continuing education conference is a must for them to continue to serve in their capacity as it relates to the Coroner’s office.

Sincerely,

Lisa K. Barker, MDI
Executive Administrative Director