Assistance Organizations

Victim Witness Services

A division of the Westmoreland County Office of the District Attorney,
provides on-scene assistance, victim compensation, crisis intervention, court accompaniment.
M-F 8:30 - 4:00, 724-830-3272
or
24 hour emergency assistance through Local Law Enforcement Agencies.

Westmoreland County Children's Bureau
724-830-3300

Excela Health Westmoreland Hospital Behavioral Health
724-832-4450

Westmoreland County Crisis Hotline
1-800-836-6010

The Caring Place
A center for grieving children, adolescents and their families.
1-888-224-4673

The Compassionate Friends
A national self-help organization for families who have experienced the death of a child.
National HQ - 1-877-969-0010
Pittsburgh Chapter - 412-835-1105

Catholic Charities
724-837-1840

Center for Victims of Violent Crime
24 Hour Hotline 412-392-8582
Toll Free 1-866-644-2882

Mental Health America of Westmoreland County
L.O.S.S. (Loved Ones Stolen by Suicide) Survivor Support Group
724-834-6351

Pennsylvania SIDS Alliance
Pittsburgh, PA
1-800-721-7437

CLEANING SERVICES

The following companies specialize in biohazard clean-up.

Aftermath, Inc.
——————— 1-800-366-9923

After Trauma Clean-Up, Inc.
——————— 412-795-1575

Crime Scene Clean-Up
——————— 1-800-295-5460

D.A.S.H. Bio-Recovery, LLC
——————— 1-888-972-0911

Restorx
——————— 1-800-479-3227

SERVPRO Inc.
——————— 724-837-8830

Advanced Bio-Treatment
——————— 1-800-860-4268

Rick's Clean Car Systems (Vehicles only)
——————— 717-691-8316

Pelly Fire & Restoration
——————— 724-935-8220

JCS Bio-Hazard Services
——————— 412-527-7380

The Westmoreland County Coroner's Office does not endorse or recommend any particular company.

The Westmoreland County Coroner's Office extends its deepest sympathy during this difficult time. The information provided in this brochure is to assist survivors with decision making and provide helpful solutions during this time of loss.

Facing the death of a loved one is an exhausting and seemingly overwhelming experience. However, support does exist through the advocacy of various survivor assistance organizations.

Kenneth A. Bacha, Coroner

SURVIVORS' GUIDE

WESTMORELAND COUNTY OFFICE OF THE CORONER

2503 South Grande Boulevard
Greensburg, PA 15601

Phone: 724-830-3636 Fax: 724-830-3064

www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/coroner

Kenneth A. Bacha, B.S., D-ABMDI
CORONER

Our Mission

The Coroner investigates the facts and circumstances concerning a wide variety of deaths which appear to have happened within the County, regardless of where the cause thereof may have occurred. The purpose of the investigation shall be to determine the cause of any such death and to determine whether or not there is sufficient reason for the Coroner to believe that any such death may have resulted from criminal acts or criminal neglect of persons other than the deceased.

Jurisdiction

The Coroner's Office is mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to investigate and determine the cause and manner of death. These include cases of homicide, suicide, accidental, and all natural deaths that are sudden, unexpected or medically unattended. Accordingly, the cause and manner of death are determined by means of investigation, toxicology and post mortem examination (autopsy) and the death certificate is then issued based on those findings.

The autopsy is vital in the determination of a definitive cause and manner of death. Autopsy objections from the next of kin are considered only after an autopsy waiver is signed at the Coroner's Office. Please be advised that the autopsy wavier in itself does not preclude the autopsy. Without this critical and often necessary procedure, it is more difficult for the Coroner's Office to accurately determine a cause and manner of death.

In 1990, legislation was added to the county code requiring Coroners to investigate "*deaths of persons whose bodies are to be cremated, donated, buried at sea or otherwise disposed of as to be thereafter unavailable for examination*". It is the Funeral Director's responsibility to contact the Coroner for appropriate authorization when final disposition is cremation, donation, burial at sea, etc.

Release of Remains and Personal Possessions

In an effort to allow the legal next of kin to proceed with funeral arrangements and final disposition of a loved one, the Coroner's Office attempts to release the body in a timely fashion. At times an autopsy and/or organ donation can delay the release of the body. The Coroner's Office will communicate with the Funeral Home regarding the release of the remains so proper planning can proceed.

The Coroner's Office does not select, recommend or make funeral arrangements.

Personal possessions of the deceased in the custody of the Coroner may be claimed by the legal next of kin, providing that they are not being held as evidence. To avoid any inconvenience, an appointment is recommended. A photo identification is required prior to the release of personal effects. Unless there is a need to hold the clothing as evidence, it is released to the Funeral Director recovering the deceased. Clothing that presents a health hazard may be disposed of for the safety of all persons involved.

Appointments for the release of personal effects can be made from 8 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday.

Organ Donation

Although facing the death of a loved one is overwhelming, a decision regarding organ donation may present the opportunity to save lives. Once it is determined that your loved one has no medical conditions that would medically preclude the organ donation, a representative from the Center for Organ Recovery and Education will advise and discuss your options. The organ donation procedure will not be performed without the authorization of both the next of kin and the Coroner's Office.

Center for Organ Recovery and Education (C.O.R.E.)

204 Sigma Drive—RIDC Park

Pittsburgh, PA 15238

1-800-366-6777

Copies of Reports

Final autopsy, toxicology and investigation reports are available for release ONLY to the legal next of kin. The Coroner's Office requires written permission from the next of kin prior to the release of all reports. There is no charge for the initial copy of the reports to the legal next of kin. The fees for all additional copies for legal, insurance, and other reasons are as follows:

Autopsy	$100.00
Toxicology	$50.00
Investigation	$50.00

* Payment for all reports must be made in advance.

Death Certificates

Once the determination is made regarding the manner and cause of death, a death certificate is generated to the responsible Funeral Home. The original certificate is filed with the Pennsylvania Division of Vital Records by the Funeral Director. Certified copies of this certificate can be obtained from the Funeral Director or the Division of Vital Records at a minimal cost.

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Division of Vital Records
P.O. Box 1528
101 South Mercer Street
New Castle, PA 16103
1-800-842-5040 or 724-656-3100

Death Certificate Web Link for all States

www.vitalchek.com

Click on appropriate state for information.

In Pennsylvania, certificates may be requested by US Mail, internet or facsimile.