

UNCLAIMED REMAINS HOLDING PERIOD



Current RCW tasks funeral homes with holding unclaimed remains for 90 days. While County Coroners and Medical Examiner offices follow the same guideline, it is unclear in statute if they are required to do so. Additionally, in the last decade and a half since this threshold has been reviewed, technology changes have shortened the period of time needed to identify potential next of kin.

What we Propose:

The Washington Association of County Coroners and Medical Examiners (WACME) are joined by all WACO members seeking to clarify the applicability to counties, while shortening the holding period to 30 days to better align with current technology.

Many smaller counties contract with funeral homes for the storage of remains. Often when there are incidents of increased unattended deaths, there is little available storage while remains that have had a complete next of kin search completed sit taking up space. This caused issues during the Covid-19 Pandemic at its height leading to the rental of cold storage trailers to accommodate the increase in deaths.

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