

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 659 Session of  
1993

INTRODUCED BY PISTELLA, HALUSKA, OLASZ, PESCI, MELIO,  
E. Z. TAYLOR, DALEY, BELFANTI, PRESTON AND TRELLO,  
MARCH 22, 1993

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON URBAN AFFAIRS, MARCH 22, 1993

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of July 28, 1953 (P.L.723, No.230), entitled,  
2 as amended, "An act relating to counties of the second class  
3 and second class A; amending, revising, consolidating and  
4 changing the laws relating thereto," further providing for  
5 the jurisdiction of the coroner.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Section 1236 of the act of July 28, 1953  
9 (P.L.723, No.230), known as the Second Class County Code,  
10 amended December 17, 1990 (P.L.728, No.182), is amended to read:

11 Section 1236. Coroner's Investigations.--(a) [The coroner  
12 having a view of the body shall investigate the facts and  
13 circumstances concerning deaths which appear to have happened  
14 within the county, regardless where the cause thereof may have  
15 occurred] In all cases where an individual sustains injuries in  
16 one county and is transported for medical treatment to a medical  
17 facility in another county where he dies or is pronounced dead,  
18 the coroner of the county where the injuries were sustained  
19 shall view the body and investigate the facts and circumstances

1 concerning the death, for the purpose of determining whether or  
2 not an autopsy should be conducted or an inquest thereof shall  
3 be had, in the following cases:

4 (1) sudden deaths not caused by readily recognizable disease  
5 or wherein the case of death cannot be properly certified by a  
6 physician on the basis of prior (recent) medical attendance;

7 (2) deaths occurring under suspicious circumstances,  
8 including those where alcohol, drugs or other toxic substances  
9 may have had a direct bearing on the outcome;

10 (3) deaths occurring as a result of violence or trauma,  
11 whether apparently homicidal, suicidal or accidental (including,  
12 but not limited to, those due to mechanical, thermal, chemical,  
13 electrical or radiational injury, drowning, cave-ins and  
14 subsidences);

15 (4) any death in which trauma, chemical injury, drug  
16 overdose or reaction to drugs or medication or medical  
17 treatment, was a primary or secondary, direct or indirect,  
18 contributory, aggravating or precipitating cause of death;

19 (5) operative and peri-operative deaths in which the death  
20 is not readily explainable on the basis of prior disease;

21 (6) any death wherein the body is unidentified or unclaimed;

22 (7) deaths known or suspected as due to contagious disease  
23 and constituting a public hazard;

24 (8) deaths occurring in prison, a penal institution or while  
25 in the custody of the police;

26 (9) deaths of persons whose bodies are to be cremated,  
27 buried at sea or otherwise disposed of so as to be thereafter  
28 unavailable for examination;

29 (10) sudden infant death syndrome; and

30 (11) stillbirths.

1       (b) The purpose of the investigation shall be to determine  
2 the cause of any such death and to determine whether or not  
3 there is sufficient reason for the coroner to believe that any  
4 such death may have resulted from criminal acts or criminal  
5 neglect of persons other than the deceased.

6       (c) As part of this investigation, the coroner shall  
7 determine the identity of the deceased and notify the next of  
8 kin of the deceased.

9       Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.