

Guideline

Subject: **Staffing of Mortuaries**
Approval Date: October 2003, November 2006, November 2010, January 2017
Review Date: January 2021
Review By: Forensic Committee
Number: 3/2003

The College considers that mortuaries need to be staffed by appropriately qualified people to ensure a safe, secure and ethical environment for the conduct of the autopsy. Staff numbers should be adequate to maintain safe working practices.

The specific issues for mortuary staff relate to the following;

- Handling of the dead to be conducted in a sensitive, professional and ethical manner with consideration to the National Code of Ethical Autopsy Practice.
- Risk to staff from biological, chemical and radiation hazards that may have been associated with the death.
- In the case of a forensic mortuary the need to understand the sensitivity of forensic exhibits is critical.
- Maintaining confidentiality

The College recognises that many experienced and capable people, with no formal qualifications, are employed in mortuary settings. The College implies no criticism of these people. However, in an attempt to raise the standards in mortuary practices the College recommends that mortuary staff should have qualifications in one of the following areas:

- Laboratory technicians
- Scientists
- Nursing
- Paramedical qualification and experience
- Relevant certified technical course

Consideration should be given to employing Fellows of the Faculty of Science in management roles.

In addition, staff should undergo further (regular and ongoing) mortuary specific training either in-house or at external courses available.