

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST II

This is advanced specialized professional medical work in the determination of the circumstances and facts of certain types of death in North Carolina to determine their cause and manner. Employee is responsible for developing, maintaining, advancing, and carrying out the medical examiner system as provided for by GS 130, Article 21, and by the approved rules and regulations endorsed by the North Carolina Public Health Commission. Contact with families and a variety of governmental agencies, hospitals, physicians, and others in the conduct of individual cases are a significant aspect of the work. Work requires consultation with medical examiners, attorneys, law enforcement officers, Alcoholic Beverage Control officers, penal authorities, insurance company officials, and others to investigate, resolve, and determine the outcome of cases. This level is distinguished from the lower level by the incumbent's demonstrated mastery of this specialty. Work is performed under the general guidance of the Associated Medical Examiner or the Chief Medical Examiner.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Employee performs autopsies and medicolegal investigations to discover and diagnose a variety of death-causing agents of an environmental, occupational, or medical nature. Investigations may be performed on cases received from county medical examiner systems throughout the State.

Intricacy - The employee gathers evidence pertaining to the circumstances of death to properly identify the unknown dead; secures information for the appropriate prosecution of the guilty; discovers the occult murder; anticipates incipient epidemics; and discovers occupational hazards and diseases. Work is of a diagnostic nature in terms of death investigation/autopsy, and requires utilization of acute skills in determining causes of death. Employees examines fragments of tissue, skeletal fragments, decomposed bodies, stains, wounds, discolorations, or any abnormalities of bodies to determine cause and manner of death. Employee must be sensitive to diverse subtle causes of death not immediately obvious to an observer.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires detailed knowledges in the specialized field of forensic pathology and skills in anatomical pathology.

Guidelines - Guides for the specialty include the North Carolina General Statutes relevant to the medical examiner system and the Division of Health Services; rules and regulations of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner as approved by the Secretary, Department of Human Resources; and various internal guides. Employee consults current professional literature, both medically and pathologically related.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Daily work is planned and performed independently, and is subject to review by Associate Chief or chief Medical Examiner. Assignments are general and may be short-term or permanent.

Nature of Review - Results of autopsy and diagnostic findings as to cause of death may be reviewed by the Chief Medical Examiner or the Associate Chief.

Scope of Decisions - Public health programs, preventive programs for diseases, and medicolegal programs are directly and indirectly affected by the work. The specialty and its work are directly related to maintaining controls on disease, discovering criminal causes of death, tracking a variety of statistical data related to safeguarding the public's health.

Consequence of Decisions - Judgmental errors include misidentification of tissues or bodies of descendants; misinterpretation of causes and manner of death. Consequences include possible prosecution and imprisonment of innocent people, evasion of penalty by guilty people, invalid public health data, prolonged trials, and development of epidemics.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Work requires contacts with medical examiners, attorneys, law enforcement officers, penal authorities, and families of the deceased.

Nature and Purpose - Contacts are for purposes of collecting data, research, teaching, or interpretations of findings.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Working conditions are unique to the specialty and are performed in a medical laboratory setting. Work requires examination of decomposed, putrefied, badly burned, or mutilated human specimens.

Hazards - Unusual hazards include exposure to highly dangerous and contagious diseases, carcinogenic chemicals such as formaldehyde or benzidine; scenes of violence, disaster, or contagion.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Considerable knowledge of the principles, practices, literature, and current developments in the field of anatomical pathology. Thorough knowledge of the diversified specialized equipment, instruments, and materials required in all phases of pathology. Thorough knowledge of procedures involved in detecting, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting manifestations and symptoms of physical conditions from pathological examinations. Knowledge of the principles, practices, literature, and current developments in the field of forensic medicine. Ability to establish and maintaining effective working relationships with associates and the public. Ability to prepare forensic and medical articles for publication.

Minimum Education and Experience –

Licensed to practice medicine in the state of North Carolina, board certified by the American Board of Pathology and one year of experience in forensic medicine.

Special Note –

This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.