

When someone dies in a motor vehicle accident.
Information for families.

SHEET 4

Coroner and Forensic system

This information sheet series has been produced by the Motor Accidents Authority of NSW (MAA) to help families and friends of people who have died as the result of a motor vehicle accident.



The Coroner and Forensic system

In NSW, all sudden and unexpected deaths, such as from a motor vehicle accident, are reported to the Coroner. This is a legal requirement.

The role of the Coroner is to investigate the circumstances and medical cause of the death. The Coroner is assisted by the NSW Police and by Forensic Pathologists who are employed by the Department of Forensic Medicine. A Forensic Pathologist is a specialist doctor.

To establish the medical cause of death, the Coroner will order a post mortem examination. This examination is often called an autopsy and is conducted by a Forensic Pathologist.

From their investigations, the Coroner certifies the medical cause of death and issues the final post mortem report.

To get a copy of the report you will need to write to the Coroner's Court and ask for one to be sent to you.

Forensic Counsellors

Social Workers are employed as Forensic Counsellors by the Department of Forensic Medicine. They assist families of people whose death is being investigated by the Coroner.

These Counsellors are experienced specialists in bereavement and trauma counselling.

They can provide support to you during the formal Police identification process and also during the viewing of the person who has died.

They also provide information about the Coronial and Forensic processes. This can include information about the post mortem process, the medical cause of death and the final post mortem report. Forensic Counsellors can also make referrals for you to appropriate support agencies if you wish.

In areas of NSW where there is not a Forensic Counsellor, this role may be carried out by a hospital Social Worker.

Other information sheets in this series include:

- **The information sheet series**
- **CTP Greenslip and how to claim**
- **Role of the NSW Police**
- **Making funeral arrangements**

This information sheet series is available by:

- downloading from the MAA website www.maa.nsw.gov.au
- requesting a copy by emailing to cas@maa.nsw.gov.au
- or phone the MAA on **1300 137 131**

The Motor Accidents Authority of NSW (MAA) has produced information sheets about a number of matters you may have to deal with when someone close to you has died as a result of a motor vehicle accident.

Families in similar situations have said having some practical information would have helped them cope with unfamiliar procedures and making decisions at this very difficult time.

You may need more information than these sheets can provide. A number of other sources provide support and information. You may already be in contact with a social worker, other health professional or support group. They can provide individual support and guidance if required.

We are all individuals and respond in our own unique way to the death of a loved one.

There are no right or wrong feelings, no timetable for grief and no right or wrong way to cope.

It is important to take care of yourself, and allow others to support you.

Remember, if you want support, it is available from a number of community services.



**MOTOR ACCIDENTS
AUTHORITY**

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