

### **Criterion 5M: Other Programs – Coroner Scene Investigations Services**

Note: The agency may provide additional operational programs designed to provide a specific service to the community. The agency must conduct a thorough risk assessment as part of activities in Category II to determine the need for specific program and support the overall risk reduction strategy. If identified risks are outside the scope of the agency’s capabilities, Category 10 performance indicators should address the agency’s ability to receive aid from partners in those areas. If applicable, the agency should utilize the generic text below to depict other agency programs that are a part of the agency’s mission, goals and objectives but are not already included in Category 5. Each major program should be numbered and listed separately (i.e., 5L, 5M, and so on).

### **Criterion 5M: Coroner Scene Investigation Services**

*The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient Coroner Scene Investigation program that responds to and investigates all unattended deaths in Douglas County. This criterion report applies to agencies that have direct responsibility for operating programs that provide Coroner Scene Investigation services.*

*If the agency determines this criterion is not applicable, the agency shall provide a brief explanation of why it does not provide this program.*

### **Summary:**

Kansas State statutes require individual counties to provide coroner services to their citizens. Douglas County has contracted with the Kansas City, Kansas private partnership *Forensic Medical of KS LLC*. to provide these services. In conjunction with *Forensic Medical of KS LLC*, the department administers a Coroner Scene Investigation (CSI) program. The division chief of prevention oversees the program. A contractual agreement with Douglas County establishes program funding. Management and direct supervision of the program is currently provided by the Program manager assigned within the Prevention Division. Currently, six Coroner Scene Investigators cover each of the three 24-hour shifts. The goal of the CSI program is to assist the coroner in the determination of the cause and manner of death for all unattended deaths in Douglas County. This is through scene investigation, information gathering, witness interviews, and follow-up activities

necessary to aid the coroner in the determination of the cause of death. The investigators receive extensive training and certification from the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) as well as ongoing training and continuing education in all aspects of coroner scene investigation throughout the course of their appointment. They work independently from the standard department structure, alongside representatives of other agencies such as law enforcement, hospitals, and other medical organizations. Department Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) guide the specific activities of investigations. *Forensic Medical of KS LLC*. receives, evaluates and stores investigation documents. Continual program monitoring and evaluation ensure quality investigation and allow for program improvements.

It was identified during the 2018 program appraisal of the need for identifying a new CSI program model for the citizens of Douglas County. The program provided with emergency personnel assigned to apparatus created multiple challenges for those units being available and ready for emergency services. From 2020 to 2021 the department and Douglas County engaged in an RFP for an Emergency Services agreement in Douglas County. This was performed by *Wichita State University; Public Policy and Management Center*. One of the results identified that the CSI services would be reorganized and not provided by Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical.

The department collaborated with internal and external stakeholders to develop a new CSI program within Douglas County. The Douglas County Sheriff's Office has obtained approval from the Douglas County Commission to implement the program. The program has been developed with dedicated staff and supported by the Sheriff's Office. A transition time was identified during the first half of 2022 for services to be completely handed over from the Fire Medical Department to the Sheriff's Office. The program was transitioned in August of 2022. The department will continue to support the transition of this program to the Sheriff's Office as needed.

**Performance Indicators:**

**CC 5M.1 Given its standards of cover and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, station(s), extinguishing agency requirements, apparatus, and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of Coroner Scene Investigation services incidents.**

**Description**

Effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 the department transferred CSI responsibility to a newly formed program through the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office. Prior to this date, the department utilized six incentive personnel to provide CSI services to Douglas County.

**Appraisal**

The department identified the need for a different model due to the challenge of CSI investigators predominantly staffing department medic units. This created a need for a new model that did not include interruption of emergency service resources.

**Plan**

The department will contribute manpower for CSI when requested by the Sheriff’s Office.

**References**

[February 16, 2022, Douglas County Commission Agenda Item Report: Establishment of Civilian Based Coroner Scene Investigation Unit](#)

CSI Update Email

**CC 5M.2 The agency conducts a formal and documented appraisal, at least annually, that includes an analysis of response procedures, equipment, training, and after action reports to determine the effectiveness of the coroner’s scene investigation services program and meeting the agency's goals and objectives.**

**Description**

The department conducts a formal and documented program appraisal annually that summarizes the program's impacts, outcomes, and effectiveness in the prior year. New goals are outlined in the upcoming year within this document.

### **Appraisal**

The department's assigned program manager and supportive staff have been able to complete an annual program appraisal. These appraisals are provided to the AHJ for review, as well as posted on the department's external /internal website for employee review as part of the Annual Compliance Report.

### **Plan**

The department will continue to utilize these appraisals to improve performance within the program as well as develop more efficient operational procedures based on the prior year's performance.

### **References**

- 2021 Coroner Scene Investigator Program Appraisal
- 2022 CFAI Annual Compliance Report (pages 92-96)

