

RCW 43.103.100 Sudden infant death syndrome—Training—Protocols.

(1) The council shall research and develop an appropriate training component on the subject of sudden, unexplained child death, including but not limited to sudden infant death syndrome. The training component shall include, at a minimum:

(a) Medical information on sudden, unexplained child death for first responders, including awareness and sensitivity in dealing with families and child care providers, and the importance of forensically competent death scene investigation;

(b) Information on community resources and support groups available to assist families who have lost a child to sudden, unexplained death, including sudden infant death syndrome; and

(c) The value of timely communication between the county coroner or medical examiner and the public health department, when a sudden, unexplained child death occurs, in order to achieve a better understanding of such deaths, and connecting families to various community and public health support systems to enhance recovery from grief.

(2) The council shall work with volunteer groups with expertise in the area of sudden, unexplained child death, including but not limited to the SIDS foundation of Washington and the Washington association of county officials.

(3) Basic training for death investigators offered by the Washington association of coroners and medical examiners and the criminal justice training commission shall include a module which specifically addresses the investigations of the sudden unexplained deaths of children under the age of three. The training module shall include a scene investigation protocol endorsed or developed by the council. A similar training curriculum shall be required for city and county law enforcement officers and emergency medical personnel certified by the department of health as part of their basic training through the criminal justice training commission or the department of health emergency medical training certification program.

(4) Each county shall use a protocol that has been endorsed or developed by the council for scene investigations of the sudden unexplained deaths of children under the age of three. The council may utilize guidelines from the center for disease control and other appropriate resources.

(5) The council shall develop a protocol for autopsies of children under the age of three whose deaths are sudden and unexplained. This protocol shall be used by pathologists who are not certified by the American board of pathology in forensic pathology, and who are providing autopsy services to coroners and medical examiners. [2001 c 82 § 1; 1991 c 176 § 6.]

Finding—Declaration—1991 c 176: "The legislature finds and declares that sudden and unexplained child deaths are a leading cause of death for children under age three. The public interest is served by research and study of the potential causes and indications of such unexplained child deaths and the prevention of inaccurate and inappropriate designation of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) as a cause of death. The legislature further finds and declares that law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and other first responders in emergency situations are not adequately informed regarding sudden, unexplained death in young children including but not limited to sudden infant death syndrome, its signs

and typical history, and as a result may compound the family and child care provider's grief through conveyed suspicions of a criminal act. Coroners, investigators, and prosecuting attorneys are also in need of updated training on the identification of unexplained death in children under the age of three, including but not limited to sudden infant death syndrome awareness and sensitivity and the establishment of a statewide uniform protocol in cases of sudden, unexplained child death." [1991 c 176 § 5.]