

About coroner investigations

Information for family and friends



Easy English



Blue words

Some words in this book are **blue**.

We write what the blue words mean.

Help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- understand this book
- find more information.



Contact information is at the end of this book.

About this book



This book is from the **Coroners** Court of Queensland.



Coroners try to find out how people **passed**.

Passed means someone has died.

We call this work an **investigation**.



We know it can be hard for family and friends when we do our work.

We are sorry that someone you know has passed.



We try to do our work as soon as possible.

Why we do investigations



There is a law that says we **must** be told about some deaths.

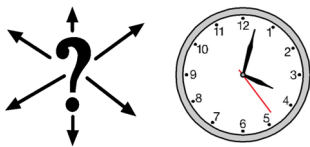


This law is called the **Coroners Act**.

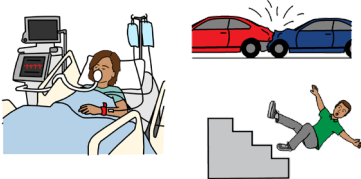


We do our work to find out things like

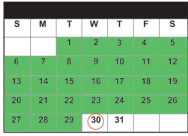
- the name of the person who has passed



- when and where they passed



- what made them pass.

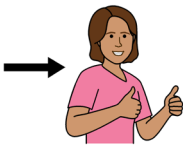


We look at

- things that happened before someone passed



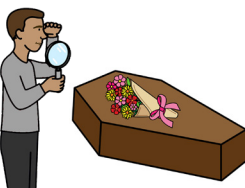
- whether something went wrong



- whether something could have been done to stop the person passing.



The law says we can get information from any person or group.



The law says we must investigate 7 kinds of deaths.



1. Violent or unnatural death

Violent or unnatural death is when

- someone was killed by another person



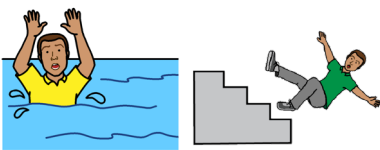
- someone passed using transport, like in a car crash



- someone passed at work



- someone might have ended their life



- someone drowned, fell or passed from the heat or cold outside



- someone passed from too much alcohol or drugs.



2. Suspicious death

Suspicious death means we think someone might have been killed by another person.



We might have to delay a suspicious death investigation if the police arrest someone.

3. Death during health care

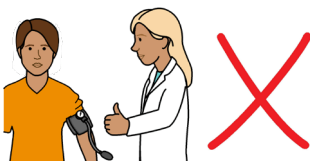


We **must** be told when

- someone passed because of the health care they got



- someone passed because a health care worker did not know what was wrong with them



- someone passed because they did not get the right health care.

4. Death in care



We **must** be told if someone passed in care for things like disability or mental illness.



We **must** be told if a child passed while they were in care to keep them safe.

5. Death in custody, immigration detention or during a police operation



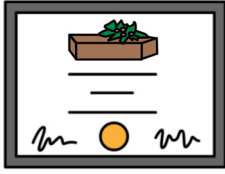
Custody means you cannot leave the place you are in.

For example, you are in jail.

Immigration detention is custody for people who do not have a **visa** to be in Australia.

A visa is a document that says you are allowed to be in Australia

6. No death certificate



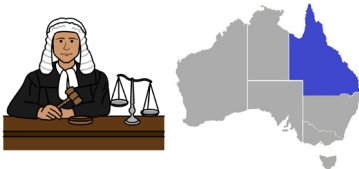
A death certificate is a note from a doctor that says how someone passed.



7. Suspected death

Police **must** tell us if they think a missing person has passed.

Who does the investigations?



The Coroners Court of Queensland

The coroner will lead the investigation.



The coroner will work with other agencies, like the police and health services.



Queensland Police

Police go to the scene of most violent and unnatural deaths.



They give a report to the coroner.



They can also help find out the name of the person.



They help get transport for the person to a **mortuary**.



A mortuary is a place where people who have passed go before their funeral.



The police can also tell people how they can get their things back.

Forensic pathology and coronial services

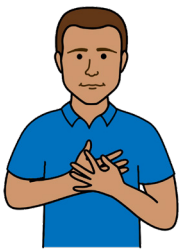


Forensic pathology and coronial services find out why someone passed.



They look closely at bodies to find out what they need to know.

They give a report to the coroner.



They always treat people who have passed with **respect and dignity**.

Respect and dignity means everyone is important.



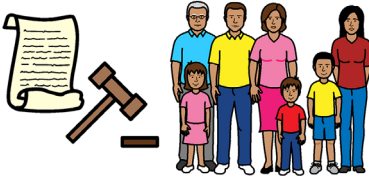
Coronial Family Services

These people support families.



They might contact you when we start an investigation.

Our contact with the family



The Coroners Act **defines** family members.

Defines means you say what words mean.



We prefer to have one family contact, but there can be more.



The Coroners Act tells us which family members can be our contacts.



First Nations families

First Nations means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



We want to make sure we respect the culture of First Nations peoples.

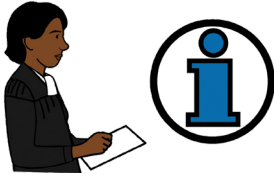


You can tell us about any cultural or kinship things we should know and think about.

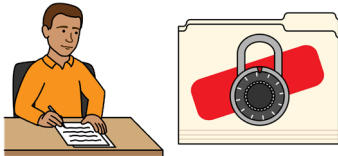


We try hard to give you information in a way that meets your cultural needs.

Information about an investigation



The coroner decides if someone can get information about an investigation.



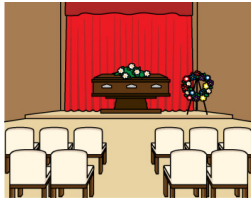
If you want investigation documents you must write to us.

You can find out more on our website.



Website

[coronerscourt.qld.gov.au/resources/
accessing-coronial-documents](http://coronerscourt.qld.gov.au/resources/accessing-coronial-documents)



Can you make funeral plans while we investigate?



You can plan the funeral while we do the investigation.



We will work with your funeral director and the mortuary.



You can have the funeral once the coroner has agreed on the cause of death.

Funeral Assistance Scheme



We sometimes pay for funerals if

- a person passed in Queensland

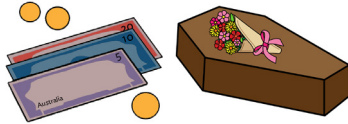
and



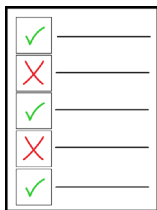
- there is nobody to pay for the funeral.



Sometimes we can get the cost of the funeral back from the passed person's **estate**.



An estate is money people leave behind when they pass.



The rules about who can use our Funeral Assistance Scheme are on our website.



Website

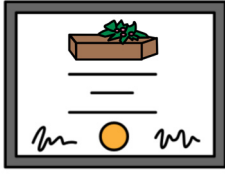
coronerscourt.qld.gov.au/for-families/funeral-assistance-scheme



People at your local court can help you apply.

Website

courts.qld.gov.au/contacts



How to get a death certificate

You can get a death certificate once the coroner says what the cause of death is.

You can get the death certificate from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.



Website

qld.gov.au/rbdm

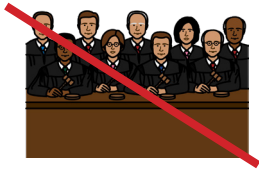


Your funeral director can also get the death certificate for you.

What is an inquest?



An inquest means we have a special court meeting to try to find out what happened.



There is no jury and the court does not say if anyone is to blame for a death.



The public can go to inquests most of the time.



We put the **findings** on our website at the end of the inquest.



Findings means what the coroner thinks happened.



The findings might have **recommendations**.

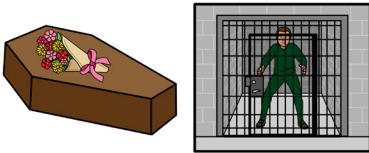
Recommendations are ideas to make things better.

Will there always be an inquest?

Most investigations will **not** have an inquest.



These investigations end when the coroner makes their findings.



We **must** have an inquest if someone passes in

- prison
- police custody
- immigration detention.



We will have an inquest for other deaths if we think it is in the **public interest**.

Public interest means there is a problem in the community we need to think about.

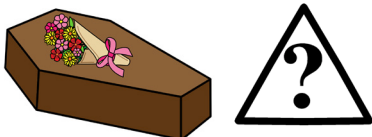


We might have an inquest if

- someone passed in care



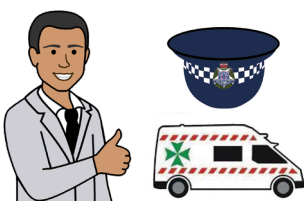
- someone passed during a police operation



- we are not sure what caused a death



- we think we can find ways to help stop other deaths



- we might be able to make recommendations that make things better.



We publish inquest findings on our website.



We send our recommendations to people who can use them to make their services better.



You can ask us to have an inquest.

You need to tell us why an inquest is in the public interest.



If we do not have an inquest, you can ask the state coroner.



If the state coroner says **no**, you can ask the District Court.

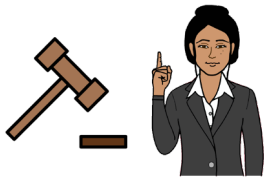


Do you need a lawyer when we have an investigation?



A lawyer is someone who

- protects your rights



- gives you legal advice



- asks questions for you.



You can choose if you want a lawyer while we investigate a death.

How to find a lawyer

Legal Aid Queensland

Find out if you can get a lawyer for free.



Call 1300 65 11 88



Website legalaid.qld.gov.au

Queensland Law Society

Find lawyers who know a lot about coroner law.



Call 1300 367 757



Website qls.com.au

Queensland Coronial Legal Service

Get free legal advice about our work.



Call 07 3214 6333



Website

[caxton.org.au/how-we-can-help/
queensland-coronial-legal-service](http://caxton.org.au/how-we-can-help/queensland-coronial-legal-service)

Community Legal Centres Queensland

Find a community legal centre in your area.



Call 07 3392 0092



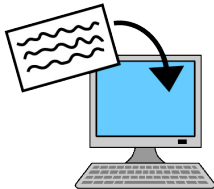
Website communitylegalqld.org.au

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service

Legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people in Queensland.



Call 1800 012 255



Email coronial@atsils.org.au



Website atsils.org.au

More information



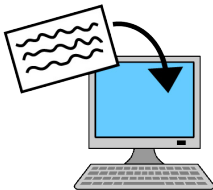
For more information contact the
Coroners Court of Queensland.

Call 07 3738 7050



or

1300 304 605



Email

CoronersCourt@justice.qld.gov.au



Website coronerscourt.qld.gov.au

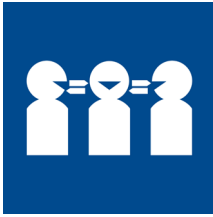
**Read the full guide for family and friends
on our website.**



Website

coronerscourt.qld.gov.au/for-families

If you need help with English



Use the free Translating and Interpreting Service or TIS to make a phone call.

You can call the TIS in your language.



Call 131 450

Give the TIS officer the phone number you want to call.

If you need help to speak or listen



Use the National Relay Service to make a phone call.

You must sign up to the service first.



Website accesshub.gov.au/nrs-helpdesk



Call 1800 555 660

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